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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[THE ACCUSATION.]

BOUND TO THE TRAWL.

By the Author of "Clytie Cranbourne," "The Golden Bowl," "Poor Loo," etc.

CHAPTER VII.

MEG TOPSAM SPEAKS HER MIND.

And, oh! that pang where more than madness lies,
The worm that will not sleep and never dies,
Thought of the gloomy day and ghastly night.

BYRON.

DIANA had been asleep for some time, when she was aroused by a loud knocking at the door of the wooden house.

At first she thought she must be dreaming, and she sat up in bed and listened, but the sounds were repeated, and then, hastily pulling on a skirt and wrapping a shawl over her head she crept down to the door and inquired who was asking admission.

"It's me, your father; open the door, lass," replied the voice of Jem Brock, and when she obeyed him he came in, closely followed by George Crabtree.

"What brings you home?" she asked, with some curiosity; "I thought you was to sail to-night."

"Yes, but we're not going to sail; get back to your bed, lass, we're all right; don't stand there in the cold," and so saying, he half led her to the ladder which she had just descended as though to prevent Crabtree speaking to her, while the young man stood stupidly by, looking,

as far as she could see by the flickering light, very pale and depressed.

Without protest she said "good-night," crept back to her bed again, and soon fell off into a deep sleep.

She was not an imaginative young woman, and dreams were rare to her, but this night, or rather, as morning began to dawn, strange and terrible dreams came to her mind.

Dreams of strife and violence, and pain and death, in all of which she herself seemed a spectator, and George Crabtree, her father, and Meg Topsam were taking an active part.

Three times in succession she dreamed that George stood by her side in church ready to marry her, that he held the ring in his hand, was ready to put it on her finger, but that on looking down she saw that his hands were covered with blood, and that, screaming with horror, she ran away from him.

So vivid was this that she woke up, and though it was still very early she determined to sleep no more, but began to dress herself.

Her small window commanded a view of the sea, and looking out, she noticed that the storm which had been threatening during the night, was gathering strength, that the clouds were heavy and leaden in hue, the waves flecked with foam, and the wind blowing furiously away from the shore.

Something in the trouble of the elements seemed to communicate itself to her soul; why had her father deferred going to sea? why had George returned so stealthily? why were his clothes missing? and how came those stains of blood on the window-ledge which she had wiped away?

It was all unusual, and her life was too much

upon one level, ran too much in one groove, and was too monotonous for anything like this not to make an impression upon it.

Time was passing, however; her fire was not lighted, breakfast had to be got ready, her household duties to be attended to, and her father might be wanting to be off soon, so she hastened to finish dressing, and went down to open the windows and begin her work.

She was astonished, therefore, on finding that her father had been before her, that the shutters had been taken from the windows, the fire ignited, and her parent sitting before it, but partly dressed, his unlighted pipe in his hand, while he was gloomily staring at the glowing embers.

"Father, am I late?" she asked, coming forward to kiss him, as she had always done since she was a tiny child.

"No, you're early enough," he replied, submitting to her caress rather than responding to it; "but I'd got a turn last night," he went on, his eyes still averted from her, "and I couldn't sleep for it; I didn't tell you when I came in because it would have kept you awake too; but there's been murder on board the 'Pretty Kitty,' that's why she didn't go to sea last tide."

"Murder!" gasped the girl, grasping the back of his chair for support.

"Yes, murder!" he repeated, gloomily, "and I can't believe Rossburn's done it."

"What? Who?" Diana managed to whisper in a tone of horror.

"Charley Crisp is dead, and Basil Rossburn's missing," was the answer; "they was the only ones on board, 'twas said; by the way, what time did George leave here?"

But he received no answer, for his daughter had fallen down senseless by his side, her head almost touching the bars of the grate.

To catch her up, to lay her on the ground, and throw some cold water in her face, was but the work of a few seconds, but she gave no sign of recovery, and thinking fresh air would help to revive her, Jem Brock half carried her to the door, which he opened, allowing the cold air to blow upon her white, motionless features.

She was still in this swoon when another person appeared upon the scene. Meg Topsam, flushed, excited, her bonnet all blown awry by the wind, her shawl tightly held across her chest to defy the elements, and taking long, determined strides like a man, came and planted herself before the door.

"Well, what's the matter here?" she asked brusquely, "you ain't having murder here too, are you? though I shouldn't be surprised when you harbour a murderer in the house."

"What are you talking about?" asked Jem Brock, sternly, "don't you see the girl's fainted; help me to bring her round if you can, but do keep your tongue still."

At any other time Miss Topsam would have resented being spoken to in this manner, but the father's anxiety was too real for her to take offence at trifles, and for the moment forgetting the object of her visit, she threw aside her shawl, lifted the girl's head till it rested on her knee, dashed cold water in her face, and ordering Jem to bring some hartshorn, ammonia, anything of the kind that they had in the house, soon succeeded in making Diana gasp, then open her eyes and look with wonder, half mingled with terror, at the two persons bending over her.

"It isn't true, is it?" she half whispered, as soon as consciousness had returned; "he didn't do it, did he?"

"Who didn't do it?" asked Meg, anxious to glean all the information she could.

But Diana, looking at her father's face, seemed to see some mute warning there, for instead of answering Meg, she asked:

"Have I been ill? what have you been throwing water on me for?"

"You went in a faint, but come and sit by the fire, and I'll make a cup of tea; you've not had breakfast yet, I s'pose, Miss Topsam," said Jem Brock, trying to avert a scene until his daughter was better able to bear it.

"I've had all the breakfast I'll eat to-day," was the curt reply; "but get the girl something, and yourself too, I can say my say when you're ready. What's become of that fellow George? He's run away, of course?"

"No, he's asleep," replied Jem, shortly; "you can go up and see him or we'll call him down, if it's him you've come to see."

"Get Diana some tea first, and look sharp, man, I'd do it in half the time; look here, give me that tea-pot, and cut some bread, a man never can do nothing as he ought," and forgetting she was not in her own house and ordering her own servant, Miss Topsam made the tea and insisted upon Diana's swallowing a cupful and eating a few crumbs of bread before she would relax her watchful guard over her.

"Now," she said, getting on her feet, and all the soft kindness in her face giving place to a grim sternness, "what I come here to say is this. Have nothing to do with that lad George Crabtree, for it's him that's done the murder as sure as I'm a living woman. It's my belief he's murdered Basil, and then killed poor little Charley to hide it, and I'll bring the crime home to him yet before I die. He'd got a spite against Basil, something Katie said this morning will prove it, and I've come to confront the red-handed villain. Now call him down to see me."

Jem Brock looked at his daughter, expecting her to spring up in defence of her lover, but she only shuddered, thinking of her dream when Meg spoke of him as "red-handed," and fixed her eyes steadily upon the fire, maintaining a complete silence.

Terrible as it was, much as she loved him, she could not, as she sat here and listened to his accuser, for one instant doubt his guilt.

Had she not seen him creeping back to the house before the clock struck one, a full hour after he had first left it.

Had he not climbed up to his own window, entered the room and left it in that secret manner, and had she not herself wiped away the bloodstains which his hand had left behind; blood which she now felt convinced was that of a human being, while the disappearance of his second suit of clothes was now accounted for. All this passed through her mind as she sat there, her hands loosely clasped in her lap trying to realise how for the second time in her life her hopes and happiness had been shipwrecked, and yet, conscious through it all, that though his guilt was proved to her mind beyond all doubt, she still loved him.

That was the fact that sealed her lips and made her heart sink—she loved him.

But for this, she would have added her voice to the outcry against him, have supplied the clue that was wanted to convict him, but now she was silent—silently silent; it seemed, while the tumult of voices raged about her.

She was still sitting like this when George Crabtree came down the stairs from his room and confronted them.

"Is it me you're talking of?" he asked, looking with no sign of hesitation or conscious guilt at Meg Topsam.

"Yes," she replied, sternly. "I say it's you who killed Charley Crisp, and that it's my belief you've made away with Basil, and nothing will ever persuade me to the contrary while I live!"

"I don't know why you should say or think such things of me, ma'am; I wasn't on the smack, and I didn't see or have anything to do with them, and I don't know nothing more about it than you do, master," he said, turning to Jem Brock, who had stood by eyeing him, as he fancied, suspiciously.

"I don't accuse you," Jem answered; "it's Miss Topsam who says she's reasons for believing you've done the crime. I don't see what motive anybody could have myself, but I wish it had happened to anybody but us; we've had trouble enough, my girl and me"—looking tenderly at his daughter—"without the suspicion of murder resting upon anybody belonging to us. You must clear yourself of that first, lad, before you talk again of wedding Diana. I don't say as I suspect you, but she does," indicating Meg with a nod, "and she's too straightforward a woman to say what she don't mean and aint got no grounds for, and I say again I'd rather the suspicion hadn't been brought here."

"Well, I'm innocent, I swear it, and I'll defy anybody. I defy you, Mrs. Meg, with all your spite, to prove me guilty. If you think I've killed anybody, why don't you go before the justice and prove your words, instead of coming to tell me what you think; I s'pose you didn't come to warn me and help me to get away, did you?"

"Help you to get away! I'd hang you on the highest gallows that ever was built, and would pull the rope myself sooner than help you to escape, if once I can prove you guilty, but it will be proved, and though you may brazen it out as you're doing, it will come home to you. Murder will out, is an old saying and a true one. Good-bye, Dina, I'm sorry for you. Morning, Jem; I've said what I came to say," with which observation Meg Topsam went out, closing the door after her, and leaving the embarrassed group behind.

For a few seconds there was silence, then, ignoring the conversation that had just taken place, ignoring George Crabtree's presence also, Jem Brock said:

"Finish your breakfast, lass; I'll take mother's tea to her, and don't go fretting yourself about the house. I'll get Betty Hayes to come in and do the work for you."

But Diana replied, calmly:

"I'm all right, father, and I'll be better for moving about a bit, instead of sitting moping; it's the shock that frightened me. I'm not over strong, you know." Then she added, to Crabtree: "Get your breakfast, George, I'm not

much at helping you to-day. There's a blonter in the cupboard if you'd like it," and with a glance at him, which seemed such a strange mixture of love, tenderness, and yet knowledge of his worthlessness, she turned to the fire again, leaving him to wonder if she too had gone over to swell the number of those who doubted him.

Doubted, they could do no more than doubt him, he felt assured, but for all that his appetite was not good this morning; perhaps Miss Topsam's visit had taken away the edge of it; perhaps the memory of the previous night was not a pleasant or exhilarating one; be that as it may, it was with difficulty he could swallow half as much as usual, though, if only to avert his master's watchful eye, he would have tried to act as if nothing had occurred to annoy him.

As soon as the meal was over he took his cap and went out of the house, while both Jem and his daughter seemed to breathe more freely when he was gone.

It seemed to be tacitly understood between them that the subject of Crabtree's guilt or innocence was not to be talked of or discussed, and that consciousness took away the possibility of ordinary conversation.

Jem sat smoking his pipe, and Diana kept her old position before the fire until her father, finding the restraint intolerable, got on his feet, remarking:

"I'm going out a bit, lass. I'll not be long gone," and so saying left the house.

When he had gone—when she was sure he would not return on the plea of having forgotten something, Diana slipped the bolt on the door to keep out intruders, and with an expression of resolution on her face, mounted the ladder which led to George Crabtree's bedroom.

I don't know what her intention in so doing was; she had certainly no thought of giving him up to justice even if she found undoubted proof of his crime, neither had she any desire or wish to shield him and hide away any trace which he might carelessly have left behind, it was rather, I am persuaded, a kind of horrible fascination that drew her to the spot in which he had stolen back, leaving the red stains on the window frame, and had afterwards passed the night.

Alone in this crib, which was certainly no more than six feet by four in length and breadth, and that boasted of no furniture whatever except a narrow bed and a box that was seldom locked, standing against the small window, by one side of which a looking-glass that might have been bought for sixpence was hung.

This was all that met Diana's eye, but the box, though open on the previous night, was locked now, the key was gone, and with that exception everything looked as usual, and gave no evidence whatever of its having been a refuge and hiding place for a murderer.

But the atmosphere of the room was suffocating; Diana threw open the window that she might breathe more freely, and looked out upon the shelving roof of the house, which bore marks of having been scratched and scrambled over, but even these traces the next rain might wash away.

No, there was nothing here, nothing that the most acute detective could manufacture any proof or evidence out of; the very stain of blood on the window frame had been removed by her own hands, and she looked at the piece of rag with which she had done it with a thrill of horror.

She would burn this, she would do it at once; after all it was no real proof, she might wrong him even by her doubts; why should he have committed murder rather than any of the other lads?

If those who loved him were the first to doubt him, what, indeed, might be expected from his enemies.

Thus she argued, even half convincing herself, trying to believe what she wished to believe, and she had come downstairs, withdrawn the bolt from the front door, and was putting away the breakfast things, when her grandmother's voice, sounding from the little closet

that was called her room, attracted the young woman's attention.

"Diana! Diana! come here!" she cried, and when Diana obeyed her she asked abruptly: "Diana, what made George scramble over the house and get into his room by the window last night?"

"Law, granny, you've been dreaming!" was the reply, though the speaker's face paled to her lips.

"'Twas a queer dream then, the footmarks will be agin my window, and I heard him go up and get in his room, but that weren't all, for he soon comed out again, and as he did it Saint Nicholas's clock struck one."

"Why, granny, it's clear you've been dreaming; you know you're so deaf that I have to shout to you, and how should you hear a step and the clock strike even if 'twas so?"

"My hearing's been better lately, Diana, and I was lying awake thinking of your grandfather and the days when we was young, and wondering why the cruel sea should rob me of him, and all to once I felt there was a face at the window; 'twas too dark for me to see it; for a moment I thought 'twas him come back again, then I remembered I'd seen my husband lying dead on the sand, and I was terrified and then the scraping and scratching overhead made me forget my deafness. I heard as well as you could, lass, and I heard him go away again, and the clock struck one, and my deafness come back upon me and I fell asleep."

"You was dreaming, granny, don't say nought about it; father ain't good friends with George; you won't tell him for my sake, will you?"

"No, I won't tell him, but 'twas no dream, Diana; you'll never be his wife, lass, or if you are, 'twill be worse for you."

CHAPTER VIII.

DIANA'S RESOLVE.

Foul jealousy that turned love divine
To joyless dread, and mak'd the loving heart
With hateful thoughts to languish and to pine.

SPENSER.

"It's all my fault," moaned Katie Jessop, as with white, tearless face she sat rocking herself to and fro before the kitchen fire. "I made him promise not to say anything; George has hated him ever since and now he's dead! Ah me! ah me!"

So she sobbed while her uncle and Meg Topnam stood looking at her in wonder.

"What is it, lass? Out with it," said Captain Growler at last, sternly. "Secrecy's had at the best of times, now it's a crime when the lives of our fellow creatures may be at stake; out with it, even though," with a shiver, "it's against thyself."

"Against me?" said the girl, looking up with wonder in her big blue eyes, "what can there be against me? It was only that I didn't like to tell," with a faint blush.

Her uncle breathed freely.

With so much crime and guilt about, with that horrible sight on the "Pretty Kitty" fresh in his mind, with the sickening smell of blood still in his nostrils, what wonder that he should recognise the possibility that even nearer and more terrible trials were in store for him.

"Out with it then, lass," he said, more cheerfully, "make a clean breast of it; naught good in this world ever come of hiding a thing; secrecy most times means shame, and that's what I'll hope never to see coming near my darling."

And he passed his rough hand over her soft silky hair tenderly and bent and kissed her.

Katie paused in the expression of her grief; her uncle was right she knew, and nerving herself to the unpleasant task, she related briefly as possible how George Crabtree had followed her along the sands, had tried to kiss her, been rude and violent in his treatment, and had so terrified her that her one thought and hope was

only to die to escape from him, and how Basil had opportunely come to her rescue.

"I made him promise not to say a word about it," she went on; "he didn't want to promise, for he said you ought to know as perhaps I might be frightened worse another time, but I would have my own way and George never came back here again. He ran away, you know, and you put him to gaol and he's lived at Jem Brock's ever since, and I hoped he'd forgotten all about it when I heard he was going to wed Diana, but he's killed Basil, I know he has, and poor little Charley Crisp for fear he should tell."

"It looks uncommon ugly," said Captain Growler, gravely. "If Basil's body was found 'twould be different, but I must go out and look about it; take care of thyself, lass, you see to her, Meg; I'm down to the harbour, the "Pretty Kitty" won't sail for many a day to come."

On reaching the trawler its owner found it as he knew it would be, in the hands of the police.

"Found anything fresh?" he asked.

The man looked dubious, then replied:

"Not much. There was this," he went on; "there was this—pointing to a dog-eared copy of Macaulay's Lays of Ancient Rome, with the words inside written in a girlish hand—Basil Rosburn, from his friend Katie Jessop."

"Yes, I've seen that 'afore," returned the sailor, glumly; "but we must have the river dragged and look over the side. Ah! here's been a scuffle, d'ye see," and he pointed to the outside of the boat, on which there were scratches and several great clots of blood.

The man looked, it had escaped his notice previously, and before their scrutiny was over, Jem Brock appeared upon the scene.

Their discovery was pointed out to him; there had evidently been a struggle on this side of the smack, and with long hooks, and the assistance of many men, they dragged the river looking for the body of the missing apprentice.

Oddly enough, one thing they did fish up, a pocket-handkerchief, blue and white in colour, but with deep stains upon it like half washed out blood, and with the letters B. R. marked in a corner.

This was all, except a clasp knife that the sanguinary deed had evidently been committed with and that had scratched on its haft the letters G. C.

Evidently this had not belonged to, even if it had been used by the missing boy.

If Basil Rosburn, living or dead, could be found, some clue to the perpetrator of the crime might also be discovered, but no one came forward to give any account of him.

The tide had ebbed and flowed since the crime must have been committed.

The dead boy's body was quite cold and stiff, and his mother and sisters were waiting for him in the town.

His father had been drowned but two years before in a great storm that had desolated many families in Great Barmouth, and now he, the only son, had met with this untimely end.

While they were thus engaged, George Crabtree came on board.

There was nothing unusual in his appearance or manner.

Sulky he had always been, and his face was neither more or less so now than ever.

He was better dressed than ordinarily, though a dirty handkerchief round his throat and two or three trifling touches, more particularly splashes of mud, to say nothing of a slight slit on one of the knees of his trousers, took from his suit the idea of its being his Sunday best.

Jem Brock averted his face as he came near, while Captain Growler looked straight at him sternly and suspiciously and asked:

"Where were you last night, George?"

"I was here, sir, don't you remember, just after you come down; 'twas half past one or thereabouts; the order was we was all to be aboard at a quarter to two and I was a bit 'afore my time; 'tis a pity I wasn't sooner, Rosburn might a' succeeded in killing me as he meant to do, but poor little Charley would n' been alive."

"Killing you! Who should want to kill you?"

"Rosburn did; he'd got a grudge against me. I s'pose they haven't caught him yet?" Captain Growler turned away, making no reply.

He had never really liked the fellow, and what Katie had told him that morning went far to excite his suspicions since it supplied something like a motive for the crime, but he was not a man to jump hastily to conclusions; there was no reason why he should take the part of one apprentice against the other; the matter was now in the hands of the police, and it was their business to clear it up.

The "Pretty Kitty" was not a pleasant place to remain in, however. Until the inquest was over she could not put to sea, and the captain and Jem Brock soon went away, the former telling George Crabtree to remain on board.

In some cases this would have been an order painful, if not difficult to obey, but to Crabtree it was just what he desired.

He could drop hints and make ambiguous speeches detrimental to the missing boy, and beyond this, could keep away from the accusing eyes of Diana, who instinctively, he felt, was aware of his guilt.

"I'm sorry for poor little Crisp," he observed, in a casual tone to the policeman in possession, as he puffed his short pipe of strong tobacco; "he was a good little sort, and always willing to work, not like t'other one; Gentleman Rosburn they used to call him because of the airs he'd give himself."

"Fine airs don't often get a lad called like that," remarked the constable.

"No, unless it's to laugh at him when he makes an idiot of himself, and makes believe that all the wenches is dying for him, as he used to say the cap'n's niece, Katie Jessop, was; 'twas a falsehood, no doubt, but he was jealous of me, that's why he done it I make no question. Little Crisp thought there was no one like him. He mistook him for me; you'll find it was so if he's ever caught."

Aye, if, but the sea would give a better account of its dead than to render its victim up, George Crabtree calculated, and even if, after many days, Basil Rosburn's body should be discovered, the action of water and voracious fish would have done their work, and any wounds inflicted on the body previous to being thrown into the water, would fail to be distinguished.

Thus it was that George Crabtree went about completing his diabolical work, and the impression soon became prevalent, that Basil Rosburn was the author of the crime.

The next morning a coroner's inquest was held upon the body of poor Charley Crisp.

Crabtree swore to the clasp knife with which the deed was committed, being his own, but said he had lent it to Basil Rosburn but the day before, and it had never been returned.

Again he volunteered the same statement that he believed the fatal blow had been intended for him, and added that the "parish prentice" had, from the time they were bound to the same master, owed him a grudge.

Fortunately for Crabtree his uncle was on the jury, and though he possessed no great affection for his nephew, he had sufficient family pride to scout the idea of a member of it being a perpetrator or a murderer, and the matter dwindled down to such proportions, that only one of two explanations of the way in which the crime was committed seemed possible.

Jacob Jenkins, who had hailed the trawler at twelve o'clock that night, swore distinctly that Basil had answered him and said there were only two on board; consequently either Basil had killed his companion and then escaped, or some third person had come on board, killed both of the boys, and thrown the body of one in the water, where, as the tide was nearly at the flood it would soon be swept away.

This latter theory, the jurymen, with the enlightenment that often characterises similar bodies, declined to entertain.

Two boys had been together on the fishing smack.

One was found dead, the other was missing, what could be the conclusion than that the one who could not be found had killed the other and escaped.

So the foreman put it in what he considered a remarkably clear manner, and the consequence was that after many adjournments, a verdict of "Wilful Murder" was brought against Basil Rossburn, and a warrant issued for his arrest.

Poor Basil had no friends to take his part. Captain Growler gave him a good character, said he was obedient, good-tempered and industrious, but he had taken him from the guardians of St. Bride's parish, and knew nothing of his relations or who they were.

When asked by one inquiring juror if from his knowledge of the lad he thought he had committed the crime of killing Charley Crisp, he replied most emphatically:

"No."

But belief, as another juror observed, was not evidence and carried no weight against the unanimous decision that the lad was guilty.

One thing Captain Growler was satisfied with, Katie Jessop's name had been kept out of the whole investigation, and though George Crabtree tried more than once to drag it in, prudence gained the day, her evidence would be against not for him, and his own position was not so strong or assured as to go in for any unnecessary risks.

Thus Katie was spared the ordeal of being called as a witness, and Basil Rossburn was charged with murder and a reward of a hundred pounds offered for his apprehension.

When Diana Brock heard the verdict her pale, dreadfully pitted face that had once been so fair and lovely, flushed to a dark red, and she walked about the big living room restlessly, then snatching up her bonnet and shawl, started off to the side of the foe that had robbed her of so much in life—the sea.

More than an hour elapsed before she returned; when she did so a stern resolution was visible in her appearance and manner and she walked up to her father's side, he, her grandfather and George all being present, and said:

"Father, I'm not going to wed with George, mayhap I'll never wed at all, but I'll not be his wife, and 'twere better that he went to live elsewhere. It's my wish that he does so."

The murderer's face glowered upon her.

"What dost mean?" he asked, "am I to be made a show on like this; you've promised to wed me and you'll do it or—"

"Out you go!" exclaimed Jem Brock, taking him by the back of the neck and flinging him out of the doorway; "you don't threaten a woman, least of all my darter, in my presence ag'in; go and tell Growler I'll have no more of you; p'raps Miss Topsam will say a good word for you," with a sneer.

"But what's it all for?" asked George, desperately. "I've done nothing to Diana to make her change her mind like this; I will know the reason why!"

"You'll get out, or I'll give you such a thrashing as you never had in your life afore."

"But won't Diana give me a reason? It's taking my character away to turn me out like this."

"Jem Brock looked at his daughter, who with white face and contracted brows now came to the doorway and said:

"No, George, I'll give you no reason, but I'll not wed you. I've made up my mind and I'm not the woman to change it."

Then she walked back into the house and her father followed her, closing the door behind him.

"I'm right glad thou'et done like this, lass," he said, kissing Diana tenderly. "I feel as though an evil bird had gone away from us."

"Thank you, father," she replied; then she walked up to the side of her grandmother and bending over her, said:

"I've done as you wished, granny. I'll never wed him—never!"

"That's my good, brave lass," returned the old woman, with a flush almost of youth upon her face; "a good woman's price is above rubies,

and a good true man will come and woo and win you yet, lass. I'm an old woman and I see into the future, and I see that. It's long ahead, maybe, and you've had trial and trouble enough, but it will come."

Again Diana kissed her, then went to attend to her household duties, while George Crabtree, feeling something like an outcast and troubled also in his mind as to what Diana might know or suspect, went off to seek his uncle, who had paid a premium when apprenticing him to Captain Growler, and whose aid and authority now he meant to invoke.

(To be Continued.)

THE WANDERER'S MISSION.

"I've a mission to fill on this peopled shore,"

Said the wan-cheeked wanderer, meekly.

"Come in! Come in!" cried the editor Of the scientific weekly.

"Our readers yearn for the strange and new,

And I fain would hear thy story;
Hast wandered hot Africa's deserts through,
Or in Arctic regions hoary?"

"My mission is not," said the roving wight,

"To fill with such trash thy pages."

"Ah, then, perchance thou hast brought to light

The relics of bygone ages?

Speak out! Speak out; for our readers crave,

As hungry folks their rations,

The vestiges that mark the wave Of long-past civilisations."

"My mission's not that of the dry savant,

To deal with such subjects rusty."

"What then, good sir, may you please to want?"

Said the editor, growing crusty.

"Hast discovered, perchance, the 'missing link,'

Or aught that is dear to science?"

"Not so, good sir; but a treasure, I think,

Of far more great reliance.

"Now, here," said the rover, with kindling cheek,

As he opened a parcel lightly,

"Is a publication, for which I seek Subscribers, daily and nightly.

'Tis a rare good book, that will make a stir

From London unto Norway—"

"Avaunt! Avaunt!" cried the editor,

As he lifted him through the doorway.

"If thy book but told of the patience and rest

Thou robbst us of in a season,

It would certainly then be in vast request

By a world bereft of reason.

And sore I am to have thought to win

For my readers a precious pageant,

And then to have been so taken in

By a rascally, sly book-agent."

N. D. U.

SCIENCE.

AUTOMATIC HOUR GLASS SIGNAL.

THE ingenious little signal egg-boiler, recently invented by Mr. J. A. de Macedo, of Headly, near Leeds, appears to be capable of a great many other applications where

certain work has to be performed at the end of a given time. The sand-glass is charged with sand in the usual way, and is fixed to a frame, and hung in such a way that when the full bulb is turned upward it rests against a stop, and is thus held at such an angle that the centre of gravity of the glass is above its centre of oscillation; but when sufficient sand has run through, the frame carrying the sand glass overbalances, and becomes inverted. By this movement a hammer attached to the frame is made to strike a bell, and the glass remaining in the altered position the sand runs back into the first bulb ready for use again. There would appear to be many processes, especially in connection with chemical manipulation, in which so ready a means automatically acting upon suitable apparatus at a fixed time would be of great value.

ANOTHER step has been gained in the manufacture of armour-plating. Sir Joseph Whitworth has produced a plate of fluid-compressed steel, built up in hexagonal sections, each of which is composed of a series of concentric rings around a central circular disc. The object of this construction is to meet the only weakness of the steel, its liability to crack; for the concentric rings prevent any crack from passing beyond the limits of the one in which it occurs. This plate, which is nine inches thick, was fired at with a nine-inch gun at a distance of thirty yards, the projectile weighing 250lbs., and the charge 50lbs. Such a shell would pass through twelve inches of an iron plate, but it produced but little effect on this steel armour, and was itself broken to fragments.

THOMAS WINANS.

MR. THOMAS WINANS, eldest son of Ross Winans, the well known inventor of the modern railway coach, recently died at Newport, R. I. Mr. Winans served his apprenticeship in his father's shops, and at twenty years of age he went to St. Petersburg, Russia, with a locomotive engine of his father's manufacture and pattern, to compete for the equipping of the then new Nicolai railroad. He was fortunate enough to secure the contract, and this led to his undertaking other public works in Russia, which proved so lucrative that in 1870 he returned to the United States with a fortune of two millions sterling.

It is said that he spent a fifth of this vast sum in making experiments, mainly of a mechanical nature, for his own amusement. He designed and built a cigar-shaped vessel, by which he undertook to revolutionise modern notions of marine architecture; at the outbreak of the war, he devised a gun in which bullets were to be projected by steam instead of by gunpowder. He also attempted a new method of ventilation, for which he erected many curious structures, including a huge chimney some 100 feet high. His last efforts were directed toward the fitting up of large organs, to be operated by steam and hydraulic pressure. Mr. Winans died at the age of 53 years.

DEBTS.—The most successful collector of bad debts in Philadelphia wears a very high hat with the legend "Bad Bills Collected" painted conspicuously on it, and "the debtor class" are naturally not pleased to have him hanging around their doors very much. One indignant debtor made a complaint of him before a court of law, but the judge decided the collector could wear a hat with a town clock on it if he wished.

It appears from the catalogue of the Paris Exhibition, that Norway has turned her attention to utilising some of her vast finny products. She sends fish skins tanned for gloves, eel skins prepared for harness, shark skins ten feet long and three feet wide, and whale skins sixty feet long for driving bands. It is astonishing to what useful purposes skins can be employed, and our ancestors were evidently correct in their old adage, "There is nothing like leather."



[A MOMENTOUS INTERVIEW.]

THE WHISPERS OF NORMAN CHASE.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

At times I feel about to sink
In gloomy water, down and down;
Pul'd back by heavy hands, and think
There must be help—I shall not drown.

"ESTHER," said Evelyn, "when you are well we have something to do together. This is Martha Page—they say 'Maud' for 'Martha' now—she is my dear, good friend. She will help us. I wonder what the man is bringing."

These last words were elicited by the appearance of that very old boy who has been mentioned before with the letter-bag from Baronbury.

"From the Moat!" cried Esther, shrinking back, as if in horror.

"From my father!" exclaimed Evelyn. "He in England! He there! Esther, that man, that Mathew Drake must make Heaven weary of him at last."

"What does your father say?" asked the woman.

"See! Come, Evelyn. I dare not be seen at the Chase. If there is any love left in your heart do not desert me now. I am lonely and miserable. Bring Page with you."

"Esther, I must go. Martha will come with me. You—"

"I! Never again. But ah! You have deceived me—and this is Norman Chase! Evelyn Hedley, you have saved my life, only to ruin my soul!"

"You are raving, Esther," said the young girl, in alarm. "Why should you not be here?"

"Because—but better perhaps as it is. Do you believe in fatality, Miss Evelyn?"

"I don't know what to believe."

"I do," said the pallid woman. "Fate has brought me here, and I will struggle against it no longer."

With which oracular words she sealed her lips, after adding, however:

"In the name of pity do not tell him!"

Evelyn made her arrangements quickly. Then she sought the beautiful lone lady by whom she had been disowned, and told her where she was going, and whom she was about to meet.

Lady Norman scarcely appeared to hear her; there was such a far-away, remembering, searching look in her eyes.

"I will go with you," was all the answer.

Together they went.

A strange man opened the gates.

No sign of Mathew Drake. No sign of anyone for a long while. At last the man reappeared and said:

"I beg pardon—Miss Hedley?"

"I am Miss Hedley," said Evelyn.

"Will you step this way, Miss Hedley. Sir Norman wishes to see you quite alone."

"You shall not move an inch in this house without me," interrupted Lady Norman. "Show us the way, sir. I will answer to Sir Norman myself, if I am an intruder."

The baronet was standing in the deep bay of an old gothic window, looking out upon the blue-black waters of the moat.

At the sound of their entrance, he turned as if painfully—as if, indeed, he was forcing himself to some desperate resolve.

How would Evelyn greet him?

She answered the question for herself by falling on his neck with an endearing embrace, saying or sobbing:

"My father, why did you ever doubt your child?"

Something seemed to take hold of and almost suffocate him before he answered:

"Was there no reason for it, Evelyn?"

And instead of reciprocating her tenderness, he held her away from him, though gazing in her face with a look of unutterable pain. No more than a careless glance did he bestow on the veiled lady who stood aloof, a quiet spectator of their interview.

"Was there no reason for it?" he repeated, his voice coming and going in gasps, as he still kept her from him. "You did doubt me. You did accuse me—"

"Now," she cried, clasping his hand and taking it to her lips, "if there are witnesses in Heaven who can hear what I say—by this kiss I give to the hand that I know to be without a stain—my father, my father, believe your child. I am not so impious. I never accused you."

"Evelyn, it is useless. You did accuse me."

"To whom?"

"To yourself."

She looked at him and fell upon her knees.

"I did, and see—I am kneeling for your pardon. Well, raise me, if you forgive me. Then let us be together again as in those other dear days—what, are you so relentless?"

For he still repulsed her from his breast.

"Papa!" she cried. "This is cruel. What is it? Is there nothing I can say to soften you. Will you never pardon your wicked, unjust, foolish child?"

And in spite of him she was now weeping on his neck.

And ah! how he yearned towards her then, though resolute as to the bitter avowal which he knew must come.

Once more he clasped the young girl to his heart, and as if prolonging his own torture, "You love me, Evelyn?"

"Oh, how dearly. Why not come home, papa? There is nothing to fear. I am forgiven. That wretch, Drake, has been turned out of the house, and we shall be all-in-all to each other, and—but—"

In her impulsiveness she had utterly forgotten the third person of the group—Lady Norman Hedley, who now stood face to face

with this man, thus cheating himself with his ideal of a daughter's love.

"Norman! Norman!" she said, as he recoiled before her. "What have you done? Why have you made her love you?"

"Because she is your child, Gertrude," was all he could reply.

There was no word spoken for a time. Then he went on.

"Because she has your face, Gertrude, your voice, your eyes, your beauty. Yes, Evelyn, there is your mother, and you—I came to tell the truth—you are not my child. Go to her. Your father was my rival. He—"

"But who?"

"You have seen your mother weeping at his tomb. Gertrude, I have had my revenge, but it was not in his blood. No. I made his heart die in his breast every day of his life—and you, Evelyn, thought him mad. Oh! once more, Evelyn. Great heavens! I have killed her!"

No. Evelyn had not even fainting.

But never, even on that deadly night at Norman Chase, had she looked so cold and white. Her lips clung together as she stood, marble-like and motionless, gazing from one to another of the two stricken faces before her.

At length the tension of that awful silence became absolutely unendurable, and Sir Norman broke it.

"Evelyn," he said, "you asked my forgiveness of a doubt. What shall be my pardon for having stolen from you the love which is due from a daughter to a parent? Gertrude; you were false to me, and he was false to you."

"Norman, now that he is dead, do not defame him. Your tenderness towards that girl is evident. Do not calumniate her father's name."

"He was false to you, I say!"

"This, Norman, is wretched, unmanly malice."

"He believed you to be faithless, and I—"

"You were the lingo of the plot!"

"It was not I! But Evelyn, why do you not speak? The girl is turned to stone?"

It really seemed as though the young girl had been bereft of life or reason by her bewilderment.

For no syllable did she utter, and still her eyes were turned from one to the other, each of whom in her sight had grown into a living mystery.

Then, as if mechanically, she took Lady Norman's hand, kissed it, and led her in silence out of the room.

"And now am I desolate, indeed," groaned Sir Norman, as he sank in a chair, and covered his face with his hands.

"What wrong did my father—did Sir Norman do you?" were the first words that Evelyn spoke.

"He loved me!"

"And he says I am your daughter. Let me go back to him."

"Stay, Evelyn. What can you tell him? You yourself know nothing as yet. Leave him to bear his punishment for a little time alone. Evelyn, he stole you from me. Stand by my side—here."

They were in a dingy dressing-room opposite an immense old-fashioned mirror, in which the coquettes of a hundred years ago might have admired their patched and powdered faces.

Something like a smile sweetened the usually severe countenance of Lady Norman, as she put her arm caressingly round the young girl's neck.

"We want no strawberry marks on our right arms, dear Evelyn," she said, with an approach to gaiety of manner; "but what do you see?"

"My own face and yours—the one reflecting the other as in a mirror. Yours is the nobler."

"And yours the sweeter."

"Yours has the beauty of blossom."

"And yours is the rose. Dear mamma, I begin to feel something like life in me again. But he has been very kind, very tender, very forbearing to me."

"Yet you heard what he said?"

"Mamma, do not think too much ill of him. He has his evil genius and that is—"

"Mr. Mathew Drake, my dear," said that gentleman, entering the room with his usual insolent ease, "who brings Evelyn Hedley a message from her papa?"

"I will take no message from you, sir," said Evelyn, all the faint light vanishing from her face. "Mamma, come with me."

She passed through the door; but, with the quickness of a juggler, Mathew Drake had locked it, and she stood alone in the corridor with the man she most hated and dreaded. He almost pushed her before him.

"This is not Sir Norman's room," she said, shrinking from his touch as though it were that of some noxious reptile. "And why have you dared to put that insult upon my mother? Where is Sir Norman?"

"We are not at Norman Chase now," he went on, again attempting to force her on, though warned off by the menace in her face—"where Miss Evelyn, whatever her name, can order a gentleman out of his own house. We are at the Mont, and here is our dearly beloved papa?"

Sir Norman, indeed, was there, a sight ghastly to look upon.

He trembled and closed his eyes as Evelyn came in.

"Who? What is this?" she almost shrieked. There was a table fitted up as an altar. Beside it stood two men in surplices. One of them advanced as if to take her hand.

No one else was in the chamber. Evelyn had heard of such deeds—had read them, but had never imagined them possible. Now was the crisis of her life.

She turned towards Sir Norman. No hope in that face, pallid with some terror which she was utterly unable to comprehend. He shrank from her gaze.

She looked at the men in surplices. There was nothing very terrifying in their appearance. Evelyn spoke.

"What is the meaning of all this?" she said.

"We are here," answered one of the surplices, "to solemnise a marriage agreed upon between you and this gentleman."

The bridegroom elbowed and smiled.

"—and sanctioned by your father. You are a minor; he has, therefore, the disposal of your hand."

Evelyn had been fairly brought to bay. What resource was left?

She was not the girl to dash herself through the window into the court-yard below, unless, indeed, to save herself from this man who stood smiling and smirking as if in the enjoyment of a long coveted triumph.

Steadying her voice, she addressed the elder of the two personages in reverent attire.

"There can be no marriage," she said. "This person's wife is at my mother's house, and my mother is in this place locked up by outrage in a room where I have just left her!"

"We are assured to the contrary, young lady," replied one of the beneficed. "Your father—"

"He is not my father!" she interrupted. "He, only a few moments ago, declared so himself."

"Everything is ready," said the self-congratulating Mathew.

The Book was opened.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Did her have good heart;
She soon shall know of us, by some of ours.
ANTHONY & CLEOPATRA.

EVELYN HEDLEY possessed three qualities, which had more than once rescued her from a position even more perilous, though not more extraordinary than this.

She had unflinching courage, a habit of rapid thinking, and a most uncommon degree of common-sense.

Retiring to the corner of the room which was farthest from the mock altar, after repelling the white-robed gentleman with indignation, and Mathew Drake himself with unconcealed loath-

ing, she looked from one to another of the group with a smile of supreme scorn upon her lips. She even laughed at their obvious perplexity. The two clergymen—"hedge priests" they would have been called in another period, men with surplices but without congregations, and ready, for the sake of a few pounds, to take part in any scandalism—looked as if they scarcely understood what to do next. It was clear that they shrank from compromising themselves by any actual violence.

"Go on," said Mathew Drake, with a savage scowl at the young girl who was defying him.

Then Evelyn spoke.

"Stay," she said, "I have heard of young girls dragged to the altar against their will, frightened into submission, terrified by the threat of a father's blight, or treated in some other cowardly way to gain their obedience. But I will not take that villainous menial as my husband. I am already betrothed."

"That is broken off," interposed Drake.

"Silence, sir!" she exclaimed. "I am speaking. I have no father either to protect or coerce me."

"He is your guardian, though."

"Sir Norman," said the angry girl, impetuously, "will you stop the mouth of that insolent lacquey? Why do you cower in his presence? You say you have loved me as a daughter. Why does his coming make you so spiritless, and unlike yourself? Let me call you my adopted father once more, and ask for your protection."

He seemed inclined to take her in his arms and shield her at his heart.

"You dare!" shouted Drake, springing forward and grasping his arm. "Do you know what you are doing?"

There was something inexpressibly abject in the way in which the baronet recoiled, as though a wolf had sprung upon him.

Drake advanced, as if to seize Evelyn's hand.

There is an old legend in Brittany which sets forth that he who has once had dealings with the Evil One can no more, ever again, approach near or touch a crucifix than he can walk right into the heart of a rock.

So with Mathew Drake, in presence of this pure young girl. She seemed to stand within an enchanted circle which he durst not attempt to penetrate. His eye quailed under hers, as he repeated, with an imprecation:

"Go on, will you!"

"Stay again," interrupted Evelyn, facing full towards the men in white. "You wear the robes of religious ministers. I believe you are, for I cannot think that he"—she pointed to Sir Norman—"who has cherished me as his child, would sacrifice me by a mock marriage to a villain."

He who was thus appealed to said, in a low tone:

"I would not, Evelyn, on my soul I would not!"

"Nor would it suit me, my sweet girl," interposed Drake; "it is Evelyn the heiress I want as my wife, not merely Evelyn the beauty to be—"

The sentence was not finished. Something in her face warned him to leave the insult unuttered.

Without a word of reply to him, she again addressed the surpliced strangers.

"You know, reverend sirs"—there was a touch of sarcasm in the tone of these words—"as well as I do—you ought to know better—that you cannot force me into this. I refuse to stand before that mockery. I will not utter a single response. I shall not even listen. Gentlemen," she added, with a desperate attempt at irony; "you may read the marriage service to Mr. Drake, if you like. I will amuse myself with my music."

And, resolved not to hear a word of the Ritual, she sat down to the instrument, which happened to be in the room, and began playing in a manner that compelled them, in very shame, to desist from attempting to perform the ceremony.

Still she played on, perhaps more vehemently

than brilliantly, and the four conspirators were utterly confounded.

In all their imaginations, they had never anticipated anything like this.

They might have expected supplications, struggles, swoons; but thus to be laughed out of their purpose by a girl was exasperating in an intense degree.

When Evelyn saw that the books were closed, and that she would be no more molested for the present, she sat in thought for a moment or two, and rising, without so much as a glance at Drake or his mercenaries, went up to Sir Norman—the Sir Norman, at any rate, of her knowledge hitherto—laid her hand on his arm, and said:

"Take me to Lady Norman. Surely I am not to be shut up with these men?"

He threw a beseeching glance at Mathew Drake, who understood it, for he answered:

"Yes, she may go to her room, but remember, she only leaves this place as my wife. Adieu for the present, dear Evelyn. You have outwitted me to-day, but the next time it shall not be in your power. Your second visit to the moat shall be longer than your first."

The door was opened, and Sir Norman led her back to the room whence she had been taken.

Her heart was breaking to know why this man, who had exhibited such unmistakable signs of affection for her, should thus entrap her into the power of a miscreant whose very shadow, as he stole about the house, seemed emblematic of crime.

But all her self-possession was gone when, entering alone, she threw herself in her mother's arms and remained there silent, as if in a sleep. That day some new faces appeared at the moat.

They were those of women, among whom Evelyn at once recognised her quondam maid, Charlotte Cooper.

Strangely enough, the recognition gave her a gleam of hope.

For, thoroughly bad as she knew the girl to be, she knew, also, of her mercenary character, and felt sure that she would betray her own sister for the sake of a bribe.

But the arrangements of Mr. Mathew Drake threatened to thwart her most ingenious plans in this respect.

Lady Norman and the young girl whom she now firmly believed, with a faith upon which Nature herself had appeared to have put her stamp, to be her own daughter, were invited to change their apartments for another set on a higher floor, though still overlooking the hideous moat, and shut off from the rest of the building by triple doors.

Moreover, none of the new servants ever came alone, but always in twos, like the Jesuits of former days.

The steward had no idea of allowing his female gaoles and spies an opportunity of being corrupted.

Evelyn, however, was determined not to be cut off from all communication from the outside world.

"Charlotte," she said, "since it appears to be uncertain how long my mother and myself are to be visitors at the Moat, I must send to the Chase for some necessities. Whoever your master may be, tell him so."

The girl made no answer, but returned presently with her double to say that Lady and Miss Hedley might send for whatever they desired from the Chase.

"And we are to get a white silk and an orange-flower wreath from Baronbury town," she added, with a scoff.

No!

In her heart of hearts Evelyn resolved, from that instant, never to humiliate herself by seeking, even for the sake of her mother's liberty and her own, to make a bargain with this despicable woman.

She noticed, at the same time, that the other did not echo the laugh which accompanied these words.

No letter was permitted to be sent to the Chase

Charlotte Cooper merely drove over with a message to Martha Page.

They brought back several boxes, which had evidently undergone a kind of Custom's 'House inspection before being brought upstairs.

Sir Norman never came near their room, and Lady Norman, in spite of Evelyn's entreaties, would never speak of him.

Nor did Mathew Drake force his hateful presence upon his prisoners, for such they practically were.

What was he waiting for?

What was his latest scheme?

So this mother and daughter passed their days in a monotony made all the more dismal because the previous life of the one was so impenetrably hidden from the other.

Lady Norman listened without weariness to the confessions of the young heart that yearned towards her.

But the secrets of her own remained as if locked up in some far-away recess, never again to be opened.

"How long is this to last?" ejaculated Evelyn, one morning, her natural impetuosity once more asserting itself.

As if the question had been timed, she received a few hours later a message from Mathew Drake.

Would she see him and when?

"Now!" was the answer, so fiercely spoken as to startle that meek young person, Charlotte Cooper. "The man came, half insolent, half fawning."

"Mathew Drake," said the young girl, without salutation of any kind or an invitation to be seated, "this is the second time I have been a prisoner in your house. Once I was brought here by violence, once by deception. You wish me to marry you. Hear my last word on that subject. I never will, nor can you ever make me. No threat of exposure, no loss of fortune, no human consideration for myself or anyone else, living or dead, can influence me. Go! I will find a way out of this."

He assumed a deprecatory tone.

"In my great love for you, Evelyn Hedley—may hear me once more—I have been tempted to desperate things, but am anxious to make all possible reparation. Is it for tampering with the title deeds of your fortune that you hate me?"

"No! it makes me despise you."

"Or for shielding your reputed father?"

"There was nothing to shield him from; he has been your miserable dupe."

"Then for loving you?"

"I loathe you and your love."

"But why all this abhorrence? Surely you have more than a general prejudice against one whose chief offence is that he cannot tear the thought of you out of his hopes."

"Ask yourself what frightened you the other night in Henry Mainwaring's room."

The unexpected blow appeared to stagger him for a moment, but recovering himself, he said:

"So, Miss Hedley, that unhappy delusion still continues. Well, in reply to all you have said, I will make you my wife before twenty-four hours are over," and turned towards the door.

"Search the boxes!" was at that instant spoken in Evelyn's ear in a whisper just audible and nothing more.

Looking up she saw the woman who had mounted guard over her in company with Charlotte Cooper. But she was quietly leaving the room.

"She means something!" cried Evelyn, when they were gone, a sudden glow of hope arising in her heart. "I am quite a detective in these matters, mamma," she added, with the first approach to a happy smile that had brightened her face for many days. "We will pick everything in those boxes to bits. Let us begin at once. First I will lock the door."

There was a knock, and a voice said:

"I am Charlotte Cooper, I must come in, miss."

"Charlotte Cooper or not, you come in no

more to-day," replied Evelyn with a fresh access of spirit.

She listened. The girl went away with some most ungirl-like words upon her lips. Then she heard her say:

"They won't let me in, sir."

"Well, never mind," answered the voice of Mathew Drake, "she is savage. I will soon have her out of that, for good and all, in one way or another."

The young girl and the lady then began with unsteady fingers the search to which they had been bidden.

Neither for a moment doubted that some discovery of importance would reward their patience.

They emptied out upon the floor the whole contents of the boxes, principally consisting of clothes and books, and, for a long while, found absolutely nothing.

At length Lady Norman took up an old, worn pocket-book, and looked at it curiously.

"That is not mine," said Evelyn, taking it from her hands.

She opened it and read, on the fly-leaf.

"From Mathew to Esther."

There was a date; but, ah! of many years ago.

Evelyn remembered the pale, unhappy woman whom she had assisted to escape, and told her mother of the circumstances, adding:

"She has sent me some message, I am sure."

Eagerly, hurried, they ransacked every page and pocket of the little book.

The young girl uttered a cry of joy and there was a bright blush upon her face as she threw her arms around her mother's neck.

"Something to do with Herbert?" said Lady Norman, with motherly instinct.

"Yes, he cannot be far off! See! Here is the little ring I gave back to him on that sorrowful night when we departed. But there is something written."

A minute fragment of paper was wrapped round one-half of the ring; on it were the words.

"I cannot get leave for a few days. Hold out, but do nothing in despair, my love.—H. L."

The boxes were re-packed. Not, however, before Evelyn had said, showing a bright object to her mother.

"They have sent me this, too. For him, mind, not for myself, if the worst. Rather than give way now I will become another bride of Lammermuir—only before the marriage, not after."

The excitement of a new born joy was gaining only too rapidly upon the mind of the young girl.

But what was it that blanched the face of her mother as she looked intently at the object which Evelyn held in her hand.

It was a small stiletto, of Oriental manufacture, in a crimson velvet case, richly gemmed. Lady Norman's colour went and came until it settled in a deep but unswerving pallor as she said:

"My dearest Evelyn, you need not fear lest you should have to use that dagger. The mere sight of it will be more than enough for Mr. Mathew Drake."

And she would say no more.

(To be Continued.)

It is probable that the ladies' club recently opened in London may be followed by a ladies' hotel. Such an institution does exist already; it was designed by the late millionaire, Mr. A. T. Stewart, and was recently opened in New York on a very grand scale. It covers nearly 40,000 square feet, and is eight storeys high. There is an open court in the centre with a fountain murmuring soft music, but the tune it murmurs we cannot exactly recollect—a solo for a lone female, of course.

AMERICAN TRADE WITH FRANCE.

CONSUL BRIDGELAND, at Havre, reports a large increase in the demand for American grain and provisions in France. The general substitution of corn for oats in feeding tramway and cab-horses has increased the demand for this grain to double what it was a year ago. The demand for wheat has also increased. The principal exports of provisions to France are bacon, pork, lard, tallow, and beef. The shipments of bacon have doubled, and of lard have trebled, those for the corresponding period of last year. The shipment of fresh beef is also an important item, nearly half a million pounds having been received at Havre between November and May.

HER GUIDING STAR;

OR,

LOVE AND TREACHERY.

CHAPTER XI.

In November the Farleighs were re-established in London.

At first the change was oppressive, and Jessie in the grave town library regretted the airy, cheerful country study, endeared to her by pleasant profitable occupation; but her tutor and her lessons remained, and these sufficed for her.

Cyril encouraging in proportion as she was interested, instruction was no longer a task to either; and, but that her young companions gathered round her and would not be denied, her thoughts would have seldom wandered from it.

"Holidays" next brought an interruption, though Jessie declared her indifference to the amusements proposed.

But, in conformity to custom, festivity ruled the hour, and the young came in for their share.

Among the pleasures of the time were its duties, and respectful calls on grey-headed friends were not omitted by the young.

Jessie had been thus occupying the morning; and after presenting the "compliments of the season" to certain ladies, the friends of her family, was on her return.

In crossing a street, the near approach of a phaeton with mettlesome horses startled her, to escape which she quickened her pace, slipped on the glazed and treacherous flagging, and fell just as she reached the kerb-stone.

The driver instantly checked his speed, and a young man sprang from the carriage and hastened to her assistance.

With expressions of the greatest regret he attempted to raise her; but, though she tried to aid him by her own exertions, she found it impossible to do so.

Perceiving her colour, and the necessity of immediate relief, he lifted her in his arms, bore her to the phaeton, and placed her in it, where, nearly fainting with pain, she sank back powerless on the cushions, just able, in reply to the gentleman's eager inquiry for her residence, to give the number of her father's house.

In a few moments they were at the door. To lift her from the carriage and ascend the steps was the work of an instant, though the young man seemed too slight for the burden.

The bell was answered as soon as most bells are, but there was time for the distressed Jessie to stammer forth her thanks before John appeared, his usual dull face excited to consternation at the sight of "young missus in the arms of a strange gen'lman."

This last, however, offered no apology for the liberty, but, hurrying to the first open door, deposited his charge on a sofa, to the yet

greater terror of Mrs. Farleigh, and, having explained the accident, begged to be directed to a physician.

In the uncertainty of the amount of injury, the offer was not to be declined; and the gentleman, giving his card, with a request to be permitted to make inquiries the next day, disappeared.

The physician soon came.

On examination it proved that no bone was fractured; but a severely sprained ankle and a bad bruise were sufficient to produce the suffering.

Rest was imperatively enjoined, and this, with proper external applications, would, he hoped, soon restore her.

As this conclusion was arrived at, Mr. Farleigh and Cyril entered.

They had been met at the door by the usual exaggerations:

"Miss Jessie had been run over, her leg broken, and she was very bad!" but Jessie's voice assured them.

"Don't be frightened, papa. Oh, Mr. Ashleigh, don't look so; 'tis only a sprain, and I shall be well directly."

Mrs. Farleigh, having given the particulars, with many comments on the young gentleman's "sensible behaviour," produced his card.

"I have heard the name," said Mr. Farleigh, "but I don't know the family," and he handed it to Cyril.

"Ernest Pecham!" he exclaimed, with surprise.

"Do you know him?" asked Mr. Farleigh.

"I once met him; 'tis long ago, when we were boys," and but for "the letter," which flashed across him, he would have said more; as it was, he remained silent.

The violence of the pain yielded to good care, but Jessie continued lame, and a prisoner. Mr. Pecham called the next day, but saw only Mrs. Farleigh, upon whom his kind inquiries, his regrets, his good looks and good manners made an agreeable impression.

Almost daily calls ensued; yet he and Cyril did not meet until one morning, just as Ernest rang for admission, Cyril opened the hall-door in order to go out.

Ernest did not appear to observe him, but stood awaiting the servant.

For a moment Cyril suspected his inattention to be design, and was about to pass him with equal indifference.

Better thoughts prevailed.

"He may not," he reflected, "recollect me; I should not, perhaps, have recognised him under other circumstances."

The "letter" was no longer remembered as he looked in that kind young face; he stopped, extended his hand, and said:

"Ernest Pecham, have you forgotten Cyril Ashleigh?"

Ernest started, the colour rushed to his cheek, his eye sparkled, and, grasping the hand that was offered, he exclaimed: "Forgotten him! never!"

The appearance of John interrupted farther communication.

Foregoing a visit, leaving compliments and a card, he turned to his friend, saying:

"Come, let me go with you, and you shall tell me all I want so much to know—where you have been, and why you are here;" and, taking his arm, they descended the steps.

In few words Ernest was in possession of all that there was to tell.

"And so you are the tutor of the little girl I came near killing. Upon my soul, I envy you! Why, she is one of the loveliest creatures I ever saw. Don't you think so?"

"That would be a very safe assertion for me," replied Cyril, laughing, "as my observation has not been large, and, for the same reason, not very complimentary; but, coming from you, it is worth something; however, I shall not deny that she is a pretty child, and what is better, quite studious."

"Pshaw! that sounds so pedagogic; and 'child,' too! why, Cyril, I shall renounce you if you've grown priggyish."

"Oh, I only spoke professionally. If I call her child, it is from the relation in which I stand to her, and because she is such in naturalness and docility, so much so that I really forget her age. But tell me of yourself. You are tall, and strong, I hope, in proportion."

"Oh, yes; the Emerald Isle cured me. I repeated the dose the next year, and since that I am well, as I say, though my careful mother will not hear of a profession, and keeps me for ever in the open air. She has a theory about constitutions much the same as about trees: that the fibre of the young wood must have time to become tough and hardy before exposure. She gives me, I believe, till five-and-twenty, to acquire a close grain and a rough bark, and after that I may be trusted to do something. In the meantime, if I happen to cough, she sighs; but you see how fresh and well and strong I look."

Cyril saw indeed that his colour was bright, but he feared he overrated his strength. He changed the subject.

"And how is your mother? I can never forget her, though I can hardly hope that she has any remembrance of me."

"Indeed, you are greatly mistaken. She often talks of you, and always in the kindest terms. In truth, you must have taken a pretty strong possession of all our hearts; for whenever my father, in reproof of my short-comings, proposes a model for my imitation, he chooses you, and I listen without jealousy. They will both be delighted to see you. We live about six miles from town. My father hates London, and therefore we remain at the 'Grove' summer and winter. Tell me when you will go, and I will drive you out."

This was embarrassing. It was plain that Ernest was unconscious of the "letter," and Cyril was willing to believe that his mother was equally so; but there was the fact, only aggravated by the insincere commendations that Mr. Pecham had bestowed on him.

His mind was entirely settled; go to the house he would not. He must excuse himself to Ernest as he best could.

Meanwhile, he had the comfort of finding him unchanged; and as, in consequence of his almost familiar admission to Mr. Farleigh's, he should often see him, he was satisfied, and hoped that his friend would be so likewise.

The good impression made by Ernest prompted to some attention to his parents. Accordingly Mr. and Mrs. Farleigh called on them, were charmed with the lady, not much pleased with the gentleman.

The visit was returned by Mrs. Pecham alone, with an apology on the part of her husband, and the intercourse went no farther, Mr. Farleigh setting him down as a churl not worth the trouble of seeking, and Cyril regretting that, being from home, he had lost the only chance of seeing Mrs. Pecham.

Jessie, released quite as soon as had been predicted from the confinement of her room, was now permitted to recline on a sofa in the parlour.

As soon as he might be admitted, Ernest was allowed to see and congratulate her; and he did so with so many protestations of sorrow and shame for the suffering he had caused that Jessie could not help feeling a little important.

Flattery had seldom fallen on her inexperienced ear.

Her young companions were more likely to tell disagreeable truths; her father's cautious commendations were always accompanied by deductions; her mother, though affectionate, was not demonstrative; and "Mr. Ashleigh! He never paid her a compliment in his life!"

As a part of their rather rigid system, Mr. and Mrs. Farleigh resisted an early introduction into general society, but they looked approvingly on Jessie's intercourse with a small circle of young friends, consisting of girls of her own age, with their brothers and intimates, who met at their respective houses in turn, often presided over by a mamma or elder sister. Dancing was varied by the innocent, if not very intellectual games of Pope Joan, Cassino, and

the like; white charades and conundrums likewise had their turn.

"Mr. Ashleigh," said Jessie, one day, "I do wish you would join our cotillon parties."

"I have no invitation, Miss Jessie."

"Oh, that is only because the girls think you too grave, and too—too—old, perhaps," she added, with a smile.

"And as I never dance, you know, they would only be confirmed in their unfavourable opinion if I were to go."

"Well, I will sit and talk with you all the evening if you'll go, and try to be as old as you are, and we shan't care what they say."

"I would not so much abridge your enjoyment, Miss Jessie."

"But it would be better for me; for mamma is rather afraid of my dancing much, since the sprain."

"Ah! but I should disappoint others—Mr. Pecham, for instance."

"Oh, I only danced with him so often because he was a stranger, but now he is quite acquainted with them all, and can do very well without me; so do go, please, Mr. Ashleigh, I can arrange it easily."

"Excuse me, Miss Jessie. I will compromise the matter; when your friends meet here I will not absent myself."

Accordingly, on the next occasion, Cyril remained with the young people. At first some of the more thoughtless exclaimed:

"Jessie's tutor! dear me, we shall not dare to speak!"

But they soon found the "tutor" a valuable addition, not only taking part in every game, but making acceptable suggestions.

Among others he proposed "Mottoes," an entertainment that has descended to our day. These consisted of lines addressed to each person, complimentary or otherwise.

The idea was accepted, and immediately, pens, ink, and paper being produced, all heads and hands were at work.

But the aspirants met the usual difficulty that obstructs such first efforts.

Pens were mended; dipped and redipped; ink flowed, but not ideas; brows were knit, foreheads rubbed, and lips, perhaps nails, bitten; but little was effected.

During this perturbation, Cyril had, unobserved, slipped his contribution into the vase placed to receive it, and then occupied himself with a book while waiting for the distracted ebullitions of the rest.

Jessie, nibbling the end of her pen, bending over three or four lines complete, except the rhymes, and trying in vain to find harmonies for "sage and grace," looked up, exclaiming:

"Why, Mr. Ashleigh, you not writing! then pray help me."

Cyril suggested "rage and lace," "cage and brace," "wage and chase."

"No, no, won't do," said Jessie, shaking her head.

"Let me see the subject, and perhaps I may suggest something that will suit you."

"Oh, no, no, not for the world!"

"Well, then, I'll try again; 'page and trace,' 'gauge and base,' 'stage and pace,'"

Again she shook her head; but, presently, having found what she sought, she, with a merry look at Cyril, tossed a slip of paper into the vase.

At length the work was achieved, and the results drawn forth with as much interest as if votes from an electoral urn—if not as important, quite as inflammatory.

For such was the accumulation on the part of the gentlemen of darts hearts, fire expire, love dove, glow woe, blaze craze, that, like a bundle of locofocos, they should have been kept in a matchesafe, at least till the young ladies were marriageable.

One was addressed to herself. She held out her hand to receive it; then, without speaking, turned away in order to secure it.

Cyril continued to read, apparently unobservant of what was passing. Presently, one of the young ladies said:

"What have you done with your motto,

Jessie? I did not half hear it; let me see it."

"Not now," she replied; and then, in a low voice, added, with a significant gesture, "It was good advice, and I have 'laid it to heart.'"

Thus occupied, dancing was forgotten. The hour of separation came; and, as soon as her friends had gone, Jessie turned to Cyril, exclaiming:

"How agreeable you have been, Mr. Ashleigh. The girls were all delighted, and say you must always meet with us."

"They are very good; but they would be hardly safe, I fear."

"Not safe! Why?"

"Everyone cannot endure pleasure as well as you do, Miss Jessie. It would quite turn my head, though yours is so little affected by it."

"Oh!" said she, half ashamed, yet rather reproachfully, "I know what you mean; but it is not so. Only I have so many things to do!"

He said no more; but his resolution was taken, and an opportunity soon offered for making it known.

"I think, Mr. Ashleigh," said Mr. Farleigh, "that the large indulgence permitted to Jessie—in good part owing to her accident—should now be restricted. We have had party-going enough. I shall speak to her mother about it."

"If you will allow me, sir, I was about to say what will, perhaps, induce you to continue your indulgence. I wish to visit my friends at Mere-moor, and, if agreeable to you, would take this time for the purpose. By-and-bye Miss Jessie will return to study with a greater zest. We must not expect too much, nor require every young lady to be a 'Jane Grey'—to prefer," he added, with a smile, "the 'divine Grecian' to an Ernest Pecham."

"No; children will be idiots—and you really wish this?"

"I do, sir."

"Then I have no more to say, though I cannot but regret it. When would you go?"

"In two days, sir."

"And when return?"

Cyril hesitated, looked perplexed, even troubled.

"Will you certainly require my services, sir? Our year, though not completed, shall be so considered if you desire it. I do not hold you to any engagement."

"I do not desire it," replied Mr. Farleigh, with emphasis. "You have satisfied me in all respects, and I prefer you should return."

Still Cyril hesitated, but at length bowed, and gave what he could hardly conceal was a reluctant assent.

"You will have the goodness, then, sir, to mention the matter to Mrs. Farleigh, and to Miss Jessie, and I will make the few preparations that I require."

On farther reflection, it was decided that, as in consequence of domestic arrangements they would remove to the country earlier the ensuing spring, Cyril's leave of absence should extend till they were settled at the "Elms."

This appeared to relieve him, and he replied more readily:

"I shall come, sir, at the time appointed, unless you forbid it."

"There's little fear of that."

The young circle met again at Mrs. Farleigh's, and Cyril was escaping from the drawing-room, when a glance from Jessie, who, by the side of Ernest, was preparing for a cotillion, seemed to reproach his desertion.

"'Tis the last evening," thought he, and he remained; and, leaning against a window near her, followed the dancers with an abstracted look.

Presently a change in the air recalled him, and drawing nearer, he found Jessie dancing the "coquette."

She was, in her merriest mood, just making the accustomed feint of presenting her hand to her partner, when she suddenly turned to Cyril, who, before he could comprehend her purpose,

found himself whirled round, an involuntary partaker of the dance, much to the amusement of all.

The next change was the "prisoner;" and Ernest, catching Jessie's frolic spirit, instead of allowing himself to be encircled, made one of the ring, and so extended it as to entrap Cyril, who, thus caught, folded his arms with a submissive air, while his captors tripped gaily round him; but, as soon as released, made good his retreat to his own room.

"There he goes!" said Ernest to Jessie; "what can he have so important to do?"

"Oh, he is never idle a moment!" she replied, sending a regretful look after him. "When he is not teaching me, unworthy that I am, he is reading law."

"Law! as a profession?"

"Yes; and papa has advised him what to read."

Ernest became thoughtful, and received a rebuke for inattention.

Cyril, meanwhile, took the measure of his room more than once, turned over his books, did not feel in the humour to read, leaned on the mantel-piece, ruminated as he looked into the fire, resumed his walk "autour de sa chambre," and wasted the evening in unprofitable thought, till roused by a tap at the door, and the entrance of Ernest.

"Ah! you shabby fellow, to desert us!" he exclaimed; "but I cannot abuse you as you deserve; I am too sorry! Mr. Farleigh tells me you are going away, Cyril; can this be?"

"Yes; but only for a short time; at most not more than three or four months."

"But you and I may not meet so soon."

"You! you are not going too?"

"Yes; in a little time I shall be off, seeking what I may never find, at least to the degree that is necessary to keep my parents quiet. I have been more plague than pleasure to them thus far. If they would only not insist on my being perfectly well, they and I could enjoy life without this perpetual struggle after health. As it is, I must meet the embraces of the spring in the sunny south, instead of awaiting her caprices here, merely because they hear me cough once in four-and-twenty hours."

"But you will return as soon as they think it safe for you here?"

"No; they have some half-formed plans that may keep us all away, no one can say how long. But we won't talk of this just now. My dear Cyril, I fear you think me but a thoughtless boy; yet I am not quite so much so as I seem. But I did not come here to speak of myself. 'Tis you of whom I am thinking. For some reason, I have found it impossible to get you to my father's."

"I know he is in manner cold, and often repulsive; but his nature is generous and true, and he might have been a useful friend, had you allowed him so to be. Nay, don't interrupt me with disclaimers and explanations; let that pass. You had your reasons, I daresay; perhaps good ones. But, now, hear me patiently."

"My father has, for some time, made me a liberal allowance—much more than I required; for, fearing the effect of the incessant guardianship, which he thinks my very life requires, he enlarges my liberty in every way that can conduce to self-dependence. I pretend not to be better than other youths, but, as a matter of taste, I hate vice; and, if I have not abused his indulgence, I have to thank the pure influence of my mother, who has formed that taste."

"But this, though introductory, is yet aside from my object, which, in plain truth, is to say that I have husbanded some three hundred pounds, and that you must take them. They are my own, as you perceive, but, remaining in my hands, are useless. I therefore transfer them to yours, as I have the right to do. You propose to yourself an honourable career. You will succeed; you cannot fail; but something must be wanted at the outset."

Cyril took the hand that had rested beseechingly on his, but he did not speak—he could but press it—while he endeavoured to suppress his emotions.

Ernest, receiving this as assent, returned the pressure, and said eagerly:

"Now that's a good fellow! That's like yourself. I am the person obliged, and a frank acceptance doubles the favour. You shall have it in the morning. Good-night; and Heaven bless you."

"Stop! stop!" said Cyril. "Not so; I have heard you, now hear me. That I understand—that I honour your generosity, your delicacy, you must see, you must feel; and, were it necessary, I declare on the faith of a true man, I would not refuse you—would not wound you by paltry objections to a pecuniary obligation which, between friends, so far from humbling, elevates, as the expression of that which is far better than money. But the assistance you offer is not required."

"I have already refused it from my best friend. I cannot tell you my reasons. Perhaps pride may have part in them. Not the pride that shuns an obligation, but the determination to prove that I have in myself the power to conquer my fate, and make my destiny. For this I must act alone. If I felt myself propped, even by the kindest arms, I should be shorn of my strength; I should cease to trust myself, and I should be lost!"

"This sounds to you as presumption—perhaps mere fustian. I cannot help it, for I cannot be more explicit. Accuse my folly and my vain self-reliance—I submit; but do not doubt my affection nor my gratitude. Take my hand and my heart—give me yours. They are more to me than untold gold. Oh, Ernest! you can never know how priceless is love to me!"

"Dear Cyril, you distress me. I cannot comprehend—I do not judge—I ought not; but one thing I do know: I love and honour you more than ever, though I seem to understand you less. I cannot press what you in such terms reject. I can but bitterly feel that I can do nothing in myself, nor for others."

Cyril cast his arms around him, pressed him earnestly, and said, in a tender voice:

"Yes, yes, Ernest; you will bless, and be blessed; all I ask is strength to endure."

"Good-night!"

"Good-night!" and they parted—Ernest with a promise to see him again before he went. But instead of his so doing, Cyril, on leaving his room in the morning, found a note from him, saying that, being unexpectedly obliged to leave home on business for his father, he could not keep his engagement.

(To be Continued.)

THE MYSTERY OF RAVENSWALD:

A TALE OF
THE FIRST CRUSADE.

CHAPTER VII.

Ah! what can all thee, wretched wight,
So haggard and woebegone?

MANY of the convents and abbeys of the Middle Ages, located in the wild, mountainous regions, were erected in pairs, so that a brotherhood and sisterhood were in juxtaposition. At that time the houses of the holy orders were the only places of public entertainment for wayfarers through the forests and sparsely settled districts, and it was deemed necessary that there should be provision for females as well as for males.

Close by the Abbey of St. John, the two being connected by a covered way, was a convent of Sisters of St. Mary, the inmates of which acted as nurses for the sick, and messengers of mercy to the downcast and the unfortunate, for all the country around; and it is doubtful if there was a household in that circle of the Schwarzwald that had not had reason to bless the meek-eyed Sisters of St. Mary.

In answer to Father Clement's message two nuns came to the abbey, and with them Mary and Elfrida repaired to the convent, where the lady superior, or abbess, received them cordially, and promised them rest and protection. And the fugitive knew that she was safe within those walls, for Father Clement had explained to her the sacred rights of the house. By a solemn edict of the pope, strengthened by a special order of the emperor, no armed man could force his way into a convent under any pretext whatever.

He might appeal to the ecclesiastical court; and, that failing, he might call for imperial help; but within the confines of the holy house he could not put his foot by force of arms.

Should any man venture to do that thing he would surely regret it, for there was not a true and loyal knight in Christendom who would not stand ready to help in punishing the doer of the deed.

By stealth alone could the fair lady be reached in her present retreat; and Elfrida, knowing Tancred's character, and the number of unscrupulous men ready to do his bidding, set herself directly at the work of providing against any possible plot for the recapture of her mistress.

She knew very well that she must be wary and watchful, and she was equal to the task.

Lionel's words of farewell to Mary were few and brotherly.

They had the promise of Father Clement that they should meet again ere long, and with that they were content.

We must go first with the lady, and learn from her own lips the estimation she had formed of her brave and gallant champion, for it is very evident that those two lives were closely interwoven, and that in the time to come they were to be mutually dependent, each upon the other, for much of life's sweetest blessing.

The Lady Agatha, superior of the convent, was a sweet-faced, gentle woman well advanced in life and of one of the first families of the empire.

She received our heroine not only with kindness and generous offer of loving care, but with marked respect—a respect which others of the Sisters observed, and were ready to copy. A light repast was served, after which Mary and Elfrida were conducted to the chamber they were to occupy, for the mistress had determined that the maid should share her couch.

When left alone, in an apartment tastefully and comfortably furnished, the twain remained for a time silent.

Mary sat down and bent her head upon her hand, and Elfrida did not venture to disturb her profound meditation. At length the lady looked up.

"Elfrida," she said, speaking very softly, and with thoughtful cadence, "I should hold you long and devoted service but lightly did I not trust you as I would trust an own sister. I think your heart is true to me, and that your love is mine without division or impediment of any kind."

The maid's answer was not of the gushing, impetuous kind.

She advanced and knelt at the lady's feet, and taking one of the small white hands, pressed it to her lips.

"Dear Mary—let me call you thus for this time—my very life is yours if it can be needed. You know me just as I am. I should but waste words in saying more."

"Bless you, dear girl!" ejaculated Mary, with moistened eyes; and when she had spoken she drew the devoted servant to her bosom, and kissed her.

"Elfrida, you have seen how Father Clement has presented Lionel and myself, to each other. What do you think of it?"

"I have thought much of it," answered the maid, with simple frankness, "and I could not help forming an opinion. The good father is not one who would trifle with a human heart. Surely he has striven to bring you two together; and, more than that, he has plainly intimated that in the time to come you should

look to each other for help and support. The monk is an old man, but his heart is warm and true, and I believe that he knows what is in the hearts of others. My dear lady, oh! how could you see that brave and handsome man, bound to him as you were by every impulse of gratitude and thankfulness, leaning upon his strong arm, with the light of his truthful eyes beaming upon you, and his voice sounding like sweet music in your ears—how could you cling to him, and feel the throbbing of his great heart and not feel and know what it is to love? I have offended you?"

"No, dear girl."

"Oh, my lady, if kind fortune could give you such a husband, how bright and blessed life might be!"

Mary's immediate answer was to throw her arms around the girl's neck and burst into tears.

After a time she raised her head, and wiped the tears from her cheeks.

"Elfrida," she said, but very little above a whisper, and speaking rather as a child might speak to an older person than as a mistress would be supposed to speak to her maid, "you saw Lionel when he talked with me; you saw him when he bade me adieu in the chapel; he certainly looked kindly upon me."

"Dear lady, if my wits are not turned topsyturvy, and my senses failing me, Lionel already loves you. His heart is all your own—I am sure of it."

"Oh! Elfrida, if I could know that he loved me—that he would take me to his bosom, as his own blessed wife, rich in his priceless love and esteem, I should be happy beyond the power of tongue to tell! Oh, it seems too much to hope."

"Nay, sweet lady: to me it seems fitting and proper, and I think Father Clement has reasons of his own for opening the way as he certainly has done. And," continued Elfrida, her voice falling as she drew nearer to her mistress, "what meant that mysterious voice from Godfrey's tomb? You heard it?"

"Yes, Elfrida. What could it have been? It did certainly issue from a place unseen."

"Aye," rejoined the maid, "and, be it what it might, one thing is beyond dispute: It addressed you and Lionel as children of power and might, by which I judged was meant that you were descended from a mighty stock; and it also addressed you as bound together by ties of common interest. Do you—can you—believe that the spirit of Godfrey haunts that place?"

Mary answered slowly and thoughtfully, with her hand pressed upon her brow.

"Once," she said, "I could not have believed such a thing possible, but events have occurred of late which cause me to doubt. Certain it is that mysterious voices are heard in various parts of the old castle, and phantom forms have been seen. It is said that Tancred has seen his brother Godfrey's form, as it was in life—pale and bleeding, and that it called him to account for his crimes. For that Tancred has forsaken the old hall of state, and shut up that part of the castle. Only by admitting that the spirits of the departed may return to the scenes of this lower life can we possibly account for many things we know that have occurred."

"Lady," said the attendant, reaching up and resting her hand upon Mary's arm, "I wish you would tell me the story of Godfrey's death. You told me Father Clement had related it all to you."

"You have never heard it, Elfrida?"

"Not from reliable lips."

"Well, I think I can tell it as it was, or, at all events, as Father Clement told it to me; and if I do it not cheerfully, I shall at least do it most willingly. I may promise that you know Father Clement well enough to receive the story as truth, simple and unadorned."

I do not know who first thought of applying the expression "spinning a yarn" to the act of telling a story; but, whoever he was, he gave life to a wording that was more appropriate than might at first appear. In telling a story, as in spinning a net, or weaving a gasket, if the

end of a yarn falls loose it must be taken up and cared for before going on with the body of the work.

Continually loose ends are showing themselves, which, if we would have the fabric perfect, must be properly disposed of before they are forgotten.

Now here is one of those stray yarn-ends. What have we to do with the death of Duke Godfrey?

Ah! if we pass it carelessly at this present finding, it may come up by-and-bye, when we shall be left in doubt and distress for want of information—information which might have been easily gathered at the proper time.

Yes, the death of Godfrey of Ravenswald has much to do with our story, because if the events which had been treasured in memory from that dark day had not transpired, there would have been no groundwork for the romance.

So we will listen patiently to the recital as Mary gave it to her attendant; and we may here say, that she not only gave it in full but clearly and truthfully, without the help of fancy or extra colouring.

"Listen," said the lady, when the twins had placed themselves in easy position; and then she went on—"The Family of Ravenswald is one of the oldest in the empire, and the barons of that line have been counted among the most renowned warriors. One of them was a trusted chieftain of the great Charlemagne. And yet, of the whole long line of gallant knights, it is admitted by all who knew that Godfrey was without a superior. There were two brothers—Godfrey and Tancred. They were the only living children of the Baron Frederic.

"Godfrey was a young man when he came to the place of his father, and very shortly thereafter the Emperor Henry called him to assist in a furious war against the revolting Bavarians, and in this war the Baron of Ravenswald performed such prodigies of valour that it might be truthfully said of him that his single arm achieved the victory.

"At that time Swabia was in turmoil with contending factions; and Godfrey was appointed to bring order out of chaos; which he did right speedily; and as a reward for his eminent services he was made grand duke of the realm, and the title made hereditary in his family. At this time Godfrey had just married, and the old Castle of Ravenswald became the theatre of one of the most brilliant courts outside of the imperial capital.

"Not long after Godfrey's elevation to the grand dukedom the Emperor Henry, harassed and worn, died; and at the meeting of the chief nobles for the imperial successor, Godfrey presided, and chiefly through his well-directed efforts Lothaire was elected to the imperial throne, where he has proved most conclusively that his friends were right when they presented him as a fitting candidate. Alas! poor Lothaire! He has laboured without ceasing for the good of his empire, but his own life has been blighted and darkened. The Lord give him rest and comfort in the end!"

"Amen!" pronounced Elfrida, devoutly, at the same time making the solemn sign of the cross.

"When Godfrey had been upon the ducal throne five years," went on Mary, "he had brought his realm into a condition of peace and prosperity which marked it out as one of the model governments of the earth. At this time his younger brother, Tancred, with a wife and one child, was quartered at the castle. He was a bold, reckless man, feared by all, and loved by none, saying his wife and his brother. He professed great regard for Godfrey, and was entrusted with much authority.

"And now came the first blow upon the good duke. His wife died. Those who knew the pair well have said that their love was simply perfect. They lived in and for each other. With the loss of his wife Godfrey seemed to lose all that he cared for on earth. Even the presence of his bright-faced boy, then four years of age, could not give him comfort.

"His suffering—his utter prostration and misery—cannot be told, and the good father of Saint John did not attempt to tell it to me. His brother professed to mourn because he would not be comforted, and openly planned grand schemes for his entertainment.

"At length Tancred persuaded his unhappy brother to ride in the forest and hunt the wild boar. He claimed that the excitement of the chase would relieve him. In furtherance of this plan, several hunting parties were organised, with which the grand duke rode out. One morning he set forth in company with four stout knights, half a score, more or less, of retainers following.

"Of the knights, there were Walter of Bermendorf, Oswald of Erbach, Adolf of Wangen, and a fourth, who had then recently joined the personal staff of Tancred, named Zwisel. They rode forth in the morning, and at night, at a late hour, three of them came back, reporting that the duke, with their companion Zwisel, had ridden furiously away after a frightened deer, and they had lost him. They thought, perhaps, that he might have returned before them.

"There was consternation at the castle that night. Somehow the impression crept abroad that something dreadful had happened. Tancred scouted the idea of there being any cause of alarm, and promised that he would find his brother in the morning.

"Alas! they found him; but oh! such a finding! At the base of a ragged cliff, all bruised and torn, with his garments rent and soiled, the lifeless body was found! What became of Zwisel was never known—but, oh! it was dreadful, and yet who that knew could help the suspicion?—it was strongly suspected that he had in some way been the means of his master's death; and there were those who did not hesitate to believe that Tancred had been at the bottom of the whole sad calamity. The remains of the unfortunate duke were borne to the chapel, and afterwards his brother erected the monument over them which we have seen, and which, at this day, no inducement can move him to visit.

"But the death of Godfrey was not all. When they came to look for little Hector, the child of the deceased duke, he was not to be found. It was known that his father had sent him away several weeks previous to the time of his death—it may have been months—and no one knew or would tell whether he had been sent.

"Some believed that enemies had put him out of the way; some believed that accident had befallen him; while a few there were who believed that Godfrey, foreseeing the danger that might beset the path of his defenceless boy should he be left fatherless, purposely sent him away, and consigned him to a lower station of life. At all events, no sign of his living has been made from that day to this.

"And thus, as you will perceive, agreeably to the imperial edict, the duchy fell to the younger brother; and Tancred became Grand Duke of Swabia. If he was guilty of his brother's death—if he set on the assassin who did the deed, he has been surely punished, and his punishment is not ended. His own wife died very shortly after his accession—died before my remembrance. His child, a daughter—was sick at the same time, and, I now believe, died immediately after her mother; but Tancred concealed the fact, and found another child to fill the vacant place. I am that child.

"Where he found me I know not, but I am sure Father Clement knows, and in due time will make all clear. He has promised me that my title to honour and distinction is better than could have been the lot of Tancred's daughter; and with that I must for the present be content. Oh! the knowledge that I owe nothing of love or obedience to that bad man is joy enough for now. I can wait for the rest. It is a strange story—almost strange and mysterious—but in time let us hope that light may be shed upon the dark places.

"Thus, Elfrida, you have the story of Godfrey's death—all that was ever known of it—

and of Tancred's accession to the dukedom. What the future may bring to light we cannot tell."

"But," said Elfrida, "what report made those three other knights of whom you spoke—Walter, Oswald, and Adolf? If there had been foul dealing with their master, would they not have known it?"

"Ah, I forgot that part of the story; and it is one of the strangest parts. Those three stout knights—the very flower of the ducal force—brave and true, every one—disappeared as mysteriously as little Hector had done, and were never heard of again!"

"How!" cried the maid, in accents of horror. "Was it—But that would be too dreadful. Oh! Tancred could not have been so wicked."

"We do not know, dear girl. All that is positively known is, that the disappearance of the boy left the way to the ducal throne open for Tancred, while the absence of the three knights whom you have named rendered further investigation impossible."

"And how was it with the retainers of that hunting party?—did none of them know anything of their master's fate?"

"Not one. The knights—all of them—had ridden away upon a fresh chase, leaving the followers to dress two large wild boars that had been captured."

After a little pause, during which Mary was deeply thoughtful, she looked up and added, in a low, guarded manner:

"Dear Elfrida, I will trust you with the whole, since I have gone so far. I am satisfied that a key to all that is dark and mysterious is in the hands of Father Clement, and the end is near. He has called Lionel for some purpose connected with the final reckoning; and if I had not come of my own accord, he would have called me very soon. Oh, what can be the bond between Lionel and my own poor self? I dare not try to lift the veil. Heaven give me patience!"

During the remainder of the time until they slept, Elfrida was not in her usual lightsome mood, nor did she strive, as was her wont, to console and entertain her mistress.

The fact was, she had received food for thought that occupied her every mental faculty, and things more startling arose to her imagination than Mary's story had given to her knowledge.

She saw some things, and suspected others, which the mistress did not dream of—things which, had she whispered them aloud, would have driven sleep from the fair fugitive's senses, while wild-eyed wonderment could have held her wakeful.

CHAPTER VIII.

—Let me from this prison fly,
Or give me to the air, or let me die.

THE monks whom Lionel accompanied from the abbey did not go with any hostile intent, but only for the purpose of reconnoitering.

There were three of them, two bearing lanterns, and the third a flask of spirit, for use in case a human being should be found faint and suffering.

As they passed out from the refectory into the cloister they found that the rain had almost ceased to fall, and that the storm-cloud, with its loud-mouthed artillery, had entirely passed away.

The wind still blew in chill gusts through the forest.

The darkness was intense.

Passing from the cloister into the paved court, they crossed over to one of the small gates of the chapel side, and were soon in the path beyond the wall.

The distance to the cavern's mouth was not great, and they were not long in reaching that point.

Lionel led the way to the spot where he had felled Master Dombitz, just at the edge of the entrance, but no Dombitz was there.

"He may have crawled in out of the way of the storm," suggested our hero.



[MISTRESS AND MAID.]

And he took one of the lanterns, which was readily surrendered to him, and proceeded to examine the interior of the rocky chamber.

It may be that he had the fancy in mind when he took the lantern—the fancy of looking to see if he could not find any trace of the door which Elfrida had opened.

He knew very nearly where it must be, and he examined the surface of rock in that direction critically.

But not the slightest trace could he find to indicate the true character of the wall.

The rock was uneven and craggy, mostly covered with grey lichen, and seemed but an honest face of solid mountain granite.

"If Master Dombnitz went away of his own volition, and by his own powers of locomotion," said our hero, when they had explored thoroughly without avail, "he must have possessed a skull of marvellous toughness, for I am sure I struck him a heavy blow."

He belongs to a hard-headed race," returned one of the monks.

He was going on to speak further, when another of the party, who chanced to be nearer to the foot of the flight of stone stairs, sounded a note of warning:

"—sh! We are not alone. There are voices close at hand."

"In which direction?" asked Lionel, hastening to his side.

"Up these stairs, I think."

At this point the friar who had charge of the expedition suggested that they had better return.

It was not their province to seek conflict. Evidently men from the castle had come and removed Dombnitz, and they might be in force.

Lionel knew that the father's reasoning was good, and he had nothing to oppose; yet, as his companions started on, bearing the lanterns with them, he lingered in the rear, bending his ear to hear, if possible, what was said by the unseen party, for he had heard the hum of voices on the steps.

With no thought of danger he crept nearer to the foot of the stairs, and bent low down, with his ear almost touching the bottom step.

The monks missed him, and as those who carried the lanterns stopped and turned, they threw a flood of upon him, thus revealing his position to view from the whole length of the stairs.

"Come, my son; it may not be safe to tarry here."

Lionel heard something more than the voice of the monk.

It was a quick, heavy footfall, and a rustling of the thick underbrush, close at hand.

At that moment the sense of danger came to him, and he started up; but before he had moved from the place where he stood he received a blow upon the head that staggered him, and a second blow instantly following, evidently from a second hand, felled him to the earth.

He knew that the monks returned to his aid, and that many men appeared from the thick cover of the adjacent tangle of wildwood.

There was a din of voices—the monks in zealous entreaty, and the others in fierce profanity and threats of violence.

Thus much was dimly impressed upon his weakening senses, and then came darkness and unconsciousness.

He knew that he was lifted from the earth, and that he was borne upwards, and—he knew no more.

When our hero's consciousness returned to him he found himself upon a hard pallet, and near him, upon a small, rough table, was a lighted candle.

There was a dull pain in his head, and an ache through his whole body.

He had raised himself to his elbow with the first effort of returning sense, but the pain caused him to sink back, when he closed his eyes, and called upon his memory. Where was he? and what had happened? were the questions that presented themselves.

At first he tried to think he had been dream-

ing a wild and fanciful dream, and he might, upon opening his eyes again, find himself in the chamber of the old keep, wither Tancred's chamberlain had conducted him. But, alas! it was not so to be.

He looked again, and it was the same strange narrow, gloomsome place. And then he thought in earnest, and gradually the past came back to him.

He remembered it all—the coming of the monk—the passage from the chamber to the crypt—the rescue of the Lady Mary—and so on, down to the mission of himself and the friars of St. John, to the mountain cavern. It was very evident that he had been captured by Tancred's servants, and that he was now a prisoner.

With this thought he started up, and as soon as he could clearly perceive objects around him he arose from the pallet; his first efforts being to discover what manner of place he was in.

It was a very narrow chamber or dungeon—he could not tell which—contracted in every way; the floor of uneven stone, laid in large, untrimmed blocks; and the roof arched to a point.

The door was of iron, covered with a pitchy pigment, evidently to keep away the rust; the only aperture for the admission of light and air was a narrow embrasure, and the only furniture a pallet of coarse, scant straw upon a dilapidated oaken frame, a wooden stool, and a table formed by a slab of fir resting upon a double-ended tripod.

He tried the door, not really to see if it might possibly have been left unlocked, but from the force of habit—a habit contracted by every true soldier of making sure and speedy surveys of all immediate surroundings when near an enemy.

That he was in the Castle of Ravenswald there could be no doubt; and now how came he there?

(To be Continued.)



[A STARTLING DISCOVERY.]

SHE SHINES ME DOWN.

(BY ANNIE THOMAS.)

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

It is an old, old story,
And yet 'tis ever new,
And he to whom it answers
It breaks his heart in two.

As Miss CLASSON ejaculates the name of Cardigan, several of the company hear it, and thrill to it with more painful recognition than can be easily expressed.

It is odious in the ears of Arch Saltoun as the name of the first husband of his dead wife. It is almost equally odious in the ears of Mrs. Saltoun and all her family as the name of the man whom they have been taught to look upon as the destroyer of their lost sister.

They, Gwendoline and her young brothers and sisters, do not for an instant imagine that Arch hears the name with any peculiar interest. To them everything concerning the first Mrs. Saltoun is a sealed book, for Arch has maintained such a strict silence about her himself, that Gwendoline has felt herself in honour bound to nip in the bud any communications either neighbours or servants may have been disposed to make.

Even the ordinarily dauntless Lady Fitzslater and her fawningly irrepressible companion, Miss Classon, have been quelled into silence by the stern coldness with which Gwendoline has refused to listen to the best efforts they have made to enlighten her.

And though Gladys' portrait hangs behind a rich purple velvet curtain in Arch's study, that same sense of honour which is Gwendoline's noblest quality and highest charm, has forbidden her even to draw the curtain aside,

though she has longed, feverishly sometimes, to look upon the face of Arch's first love.

So now though consternation and many poignantly painful reminiscences fill the minds of these people when they hear this stranger addressed as "Captain Cardigan," they have not the additional misery of knowing yet what Arch is feeling and why he feels it.

There is something dramatic in the situation that appeals to Lady Ellerdale's instincts, and nerves her to the task before her.

She watches Cadogan with sparkling eyes and parted lips, knowing well that there is nothing for her now but to take the cue from him.

In a moment he gives it to her.

"Meeting you here is, indeed, an unexpected pleasure, Lady Ellerdale," he says, as calmly as if he had not been tracking her down with the remorseless zeal of a bloodhound.

He raises his hat deferentially as he speaks. His manner to her is perfectly that of a casual acquaintance, who is pleased, but not deeply interested, at meeting her again.

She breathes freely once more, for she understands that he is going to spare her before these people.

In a moment she has risen and extended her hand towards him with graceful warmth and courtesy.

"Let me introduce you to my husband, Lord Ellerdale, first, Mr. Cadogan," she says, emphasising his name ever so slightly, and a load is lifted off the Saltouns' hearts as they hear her. After all he is not the distrusted husband, the suspected destroyer of poor dead Gladys. Arch responds to the introduction Lady Ellerdale immediately effects with cordiality, and the hostess, Mrs. Saltoun, welcomes the stranger heartily to the ruins of the feast, in sheer gladness that he is not somebody else.

Only Miss Classon looks bewildered, unconvinced, malicious, and altogether "obstructive."

She is as certain as she has ever been of anything in this world that the man before her,

who for some occult reason Lady Ellerdale is passing off as a "Mr. Cadogan," is the notorious Captain Cardigan of her Dublin days, the husband of the equally notorious Gladys.

Miss Classon's spiteful, envious heart absolutely contracts with pain as she remembers that unluckily Gladys is beyond the reach of the law, beyond the power of anyone to humiliate her by branding her as a bigamist.

Another of his fellow creatures seems determined to proclaim the man to be other than the stranger he is professing to be.

Vengeance, the big, sensible mastiff, insists upon hailing him as an old friend.

The dog will not be repelled, will not be quieted and silenced, whatever other people may permit themselves to be.

Vengeance licks Cadogan's hand, and clumsily gambols about him, to the detriment of the table arrangements, and the downfall, ultimately, of little Archie, who in his endeavours to restrain the demonstrations of the dog who has always been held sacred to the family, towards a stranger, falls backwards with Vengeance among the debris of chicken and salmon mayonnaise.

Mr. Cadogan proves himself an adept in the art of making himself at home and agreeable, bringing by this means blessings that are genuine enough, but may be of doubtful worth, upon his head from Lady Ellerdale.

"He is going to spare me! Heaven reward him!" is her first thought, and this is the offspring of the omnipotent law of self-preservation. "He has only come because the impulse to see me once again has been stronger than his sense of discretion. Bless such pardonable infatuation!" is her next passing reflection, and she contrives to make him understand that she is thinking kindly and gratefully of him, which is about as good a "bit of business" as she has ever done in her life, though she is unconscious of it.

The man is almost touched by her gratitude into thinking that he will be magnanimous and forbearing.

At the same time, even as he thinks it, he remembers that "thought" is not "binding in law."

It must be admitted that a generous nature would not have prompted this latter reflection, but in depicting Mr. Cadogan veraciously, it is impossible to make generosity a prominent characteristic.

Meanwhile Lord Ellerdale regards the stranger quietly, curiously, but apparently not at all suspiciously.

He reminds himself that he has never heard his wife make mention in any way of this ancient acquaintance of hers.

At the same time he is logical enough to bear in mind that the omission has been not only natural but excusable.

It has never seemed good to Lady Ellerdale to talk either of her late profession or of her associates in the same, since the day she quitted her once-loved career, and caught a coronet.

"Doubtless this fellow is an actor," Lord Ellerdale tells himself.

At the same time he remembers Miss Classon's exclamation of "Captain Cardigan!"

The name thrills him too, for it was borne, he remembers, before her marriage with Arch Saltoun, by the woman who still lives in his memory as the most attractive and fascinating creature into whom he ever breathed the breath of life.

There is an extraordinary coincidence, to say the least of it, in all this, and Lord Ellerdale feels strongly tempted to try and discover whether there is in it more than mere coincidence.

Now his lordship is not one who is given to the practice of any kind of self-denial.

Accordingly, presently, to her trembling delight, Miss Classon is the recipient of an honour unto which she was not born, and unto which she has never aspired to attain. Lord Ellerdale volunteers a remark to her.

There is not much in the remark, but it breaks the ice between them, and Miss Classon feels that if the rest of the company would not begin to stare in tongue-tied amazement at this unexpected act of condescension on the part of his lordship, the conversation might really glide into a comfortable channel.

As it is, there is a good deal of difficulty in sustaining it with anything like apparent ease.

She feels that she would not miss one glance from those eyes which have fallen upon her for the first time for "all the wealth of the Indies." But she cannot resist the temptation to continually glance round the circle on whose faces she fondly fancies she traces even more chagrin than astonishment.

But her glory is of brief duration, and he soon tires of descending from his high estate when he discovers that there is no further information to be extracted from her concerning Captain Cardigan than the following:

No, she did not know him personally, didn't happen to visit in the same "set" in Dublin; her friends were very particular, and Captain Cardigan had a very bad name for gambling and all kinds of wickedness at which her maiden modesty wouldn't even permit her to hint. But she had often seen him riding about with other ladies, never with his wife, and certainly this Mr. Cadogan was like him, painfully like him if he was dead.

It is not a very strong foundation on which to build up either a romance or an act of accusation.

Nevertheless, Lord Ellerdale feels with almost feminine accuracy, by intuition, that something unpleasant will come of the likeness, and that a shadow of the unpleasantness will fall upon himself.

It almost annoys him when he hears Mr. Saltoun asking for Mr. Cadogan's address, and promising (when he hears that Cadogan is staying at the Hesselton Inn) to call upon him.

"Why can't he let the fellow go? He'll turn out to be an acrobat, or a music-hall singer, or something of the sort, and he'll go back to his boon companions and talk to them of his

'friends Ellerdale and Saltoun.' I wish to heaven that Geraldine would keep these offshoots from her past life from protruding themselves into her presence."

Lady Ellerdale, on the contrary, is quite resigned to Mr. Cadogan's longer sojourn among them, quite resigned to the situation generally, indeed.

She feels a pleasing certainty now that Cadogan has fallen upon golden days, and will not harass her any more.

Feeling this, she allows some of the ancient kindness to obtain once more in her heart for him, and so in the confusion there is when the time comes for the homeward start, she suffers him to draw her on one side for a few parting words.

"I won't bother you with anything like sentiment," he begins, "but upon my word I never saw you looking better or handsomer; it gave me a touch of the sensation of the old times when you looked at me just now kindly."

"I have always felt kindly towards you, but you have frightened me terribly at times, Charlie," she answers, trembling a little, "but that's all over now, and we'll be good friends, won't we?"

"I hope so," he says, cordially, putting all sentiment aside as he says to himself, "it is very pleasant to this gentleman at all times to be on friendly terms with a rich woman." "Who was Saltoun's second wife, can you tell me?"

"Oh, a nobody, but a very nice one," Lady Ellerdale answers. "A young lady artist introduced to him by his brother-in-law, Clement Dumorest, the painter; her father is a clergyman, a Mr. Jones, and all those young people are her brothers and sisters."

"Gwendoline! Archie and I are going to ride on," Arch Saltoun shouts to his wife just at this juncture, and Cadogan repeats the name involuntarily.

"Gwendoline! is that her name? Was she Gwendoline Jones?"

"Yes," Lady Ellerdale answers in indifferent unconcern, even though she perceives that Cadogan turns round at once, and scans with evidently strong interest the fair, handsome face that has won Arch Saltoun's second love.

"I shall do myself the pleasure of calling on you to-morrow at any hour at which you can assure me I am likely to find you alone?" Cadogan murmurs, when he is saying good-bye to Lady Ellerdale, and for the first time she feels a thrill of the old fear and distrust.

"Why when I am alone?"

"Because I have business to discuss with you, and it might not be pleasant for you that other people should hear it," he replies, and Lady Ellerdale drives home with all her worst fears revived—a miserable woman.

It does not tend to calm these fears, or in any way conduce to the restoration of her peace of mind, when Lord Ellerdale begins to question her as to where, and how, and when, and under what circumstances her acquaintance with Mr. Cadogan commenced and throve?

She does not dare to tell him the truth, poor wretched woman, and she is almost equally afraid to tell him a tissue of plausible falsehoods, for she has had no opportunity of arranging these latter with Cadogan, and therefore he may at any time, in amiable ignorance of what she has said, topple down any little safe edifice she may erect if he is questioned by Lord Ellerdale.

In this dilemma there is nothing for her to do, no other course for her to adopt, than to seem willing; she tried to answer curtly, and to seem to think Cadogan an insignificant bore.

"Met him—oh! I used to meet him at all sorts of places about in the provinces, just as I did dozens of other people; it's impossible to remember all the members of all the companies you have ever played with."

"He never played any very important part with you then?" Lord Ellerdale goes on. And her ladyship feels the blood tingling up into her cheeks, for it seems to her guilty conscience that there is terrible significance in the question.

True to his promise (he always kept a cruel one) Cadogan calls on her the next day, and averse as she is to receiving him at all again, to his gratification she receives him alone.

"This is well," he says, encouragingly, "for the sooner we settle the business the better. I am not inclined to stay fooling about in Hesselton any longer. Why haven't you answered my appeal? Why haven't you sent me the money?"

Then with a burst of tears she tells him about the jewels.

"Poor little bungler!" he says, patronisingly. "I can fancy the fright you were in, but that's over, and we'll say no more about it; it's useless dwelling on unpleasant topics; what have you got for me?"

She mentions a small sum deprecatingly.

"That's no use—no use at all," he says, roughly.

"Literally it's all I can give you; don't you think that I would get rid of you at any price if I could?" she says, hopelessly.

"Then you know what you may expect, madame," he replies, rising and bowing himself out of her presence without another word.

Over at Friars Court also domestic affairs have taken an unpleasant turn.

The morning of the day following the picnic turns out showery, and so Gwendoline and her young sisters declare their intention of staying in and working until luncheon, when Mr. Saltoun, his boy Archie, and his brothers-in-law go out for the daily ride.

Friars Court is regarded as an earthly Paradise by all the Miss Joneses? They know every nook and corner of it, but still they are untiring in their exertions to discover fresh beauties, and by this means give themselves fresh sensations. Crevel work soon palls upon them; so does playing and singing.

All these things they can do at home in the quiet little vicarage where their hum-drum lives have been passed.

They become intolerably wearisome to Gwendoline, whose duties and pleasures never leave her one moment for repining, with their complaints of the weather, and the impossibility of their getting out.

Finally, in order to please them, but solely against her own judgment, she consents to their doing what she has never done herself in her husband's house!—namely, lifting the veil that shrouds the portrait of his first wife.

"We will never tell Arch that we have seen it, but do let us just for once, Gwendoline, there's a dear; there's no harm in it, it's only your over scrupulousness that has kept you from seeing it all this time," they plead, and she lets them win their cause.

"I shall tell Arch what we have done the minute he comes in," she says, as she leads the way to the study.

Then she pauses with a quivering hand on the curtain for a moment or two, and then—draws it aside.

The portrait smiles down upon them with all the witchery of the original, and the startled group fall back, crying out:

"Why, it's sister Gladys!"

CHAPTER XXXIX.

And this is all my story told,
My life holds nothing more;
I live because God holds my life,
And keeps his Heaven in store.

The younger sisters, some of whom can but dimly remember that lovely Gladys whose loss has been the one sorrowful cloud hovering over their otherwise happy home, fall to exclaiming and ejaculating, and lamenting and surmising, with girlish volubility.

But Gwendoline remains silent, stricken dumb, it seems, with horror and with shame.

Yes, shame! for though in the eyes of Heaven and her reasonable fellow-creatures she is still the real wife of Arch Saltoun, still an honoured and honourable matron, she knows that the law of the country will disown the legality of her marriage, and disavow the legitimacy of her son

—Little Archie—his father's idol, the apple of her husband's eye!

"Heaven help us all! how will Arch bear the knowledge that his boy is no longer his heir?" the miserable mother asks herself, as, heedless of her sisters' futile efforts to comfort and sympathise with her, she remains steeped in hopeless thought.

Slowly, with a trembling hand, she draws the curtain over that fair, fatal face, the sight of which seems to daze her eyes now, and leads the group of gabbling girls out of the room.

And now almost sharply, for her patient spirit is overstrained, her sweet temper overtaxed, she asks them to "leave her, and not to chatter so idly."

"You'll never let Arch know you've found it out?" one of them ventures to say, and Gwendoline answers with indignation at the idea of a mean course being suggested to her.

"It will break his heart, but he must hear it the moment he comes in," she says; then she adds with a sob: "you don't know what an awful thing this is, girls. I shall have to go home to papa; it will kill me—it will kill me!"

And at last poor Gwendoline cries such bitter tears as she has never deemed it possible she could shed.

Presently she hears little Archie's voice resounding through the hall in bright, joyful accents, as he narrates to someone whom he meets some marvellous exploit of Steel Grey's, and she knows the riding party have returned and that the moment has come.

To hesitate will be to make a hopelessly bad matter worse, but she does flinch from the appalling task before her as she goes to seek her husband in his study.

He is whistling cheerfully as she enters, but ceases at once to say:

"Well, darling, what have you been doing with yourself? you look as if you had seen a ghost!"

"So I have, Arch," she gasps, and then she goes to him, and with her arms tightly wound round his neck, tells him the whole story in a few broken, but dreadfully lucid and coherent words.

For a few minutes he says nothing, only holds her tightly to him with a grasp that tells her that he has already fully determined that what He has joined together man shall not put asunder; and she, comforted and reassured in spite of herself, does not want him to speak.

At last, feeling that he has got his emotions under thorough control, he says:

"This is not nearly so terrible as you think, my own wife; the only sorrow I feel about it is for you; it is sad that you should have discovered what must necessarily be very painful to you, but on the other hand we must both rejoice that you did not discover it before. We are bound to each other now by a thousand precious ties that we dare not break. As for what you say about my Archie, put all doubts and fears aside. My son is my heir still, for it's a very little bit of the property that's entailed, and in order that all your scruples may be set at rest I'll take you to Switzerland, where we'll go through the ceremony again. There shall be no idle talk or gossip about it either; your sisters love you too well ever to be indiscreet enough to mention the subject; poor Gladys in her grave will never disturb the peace of one of us."

It is not a difficult task to persuade the loving wife and adoring mother to be happy once more.

Without being a weakly reliant woman, she does rely very fully upon Arch's judgment, and is satisfied now that what Arch pronounces right cannot be wrong.

Still the shock has been a severe one to her, and she shows that it has been such in a hundred unconscious ways that touch Arch deeply, and make him even more tender and devoted to his wife than he has ever been before.

The young sisters, whose idle curiosity has been the means of bringing this unhappiness

on Gwendoline, are humble and contrite now, and are in quite the fitting frame of mind to make any promises as to silence and discretion which may be required of them.

And the unintentional cause of all this—the life-like portrait of Gladys—is removed from Arch's study, and put away in a sequestered nook in the roomy old house, from whence it will not emerge till the memory of these things shall have passed away.

Mr. Cadogan, though he stays on at the Hesselton Inn for some weeks, does not take those active measures against Lady Ellerdale with which he threatened her.

The fact is despair has sharpened her always keen wits, and she has developed a scheme, and propounded the same to her unscrupulous friend, which rather finds favour in his eyes. It is as follows:

She has put before him plainly and forcibly the fact that, in the nature of things, it is impossible that she can go on supplying his extortionate demands.

In the first place she avers that the state of fear and anxiety in which he keeps her has already seriously undermined his health, and that very little more will kill her.

He feels that there is truth in her statement, that if she dies he will never be able to extract one penny more from Lord Ellerdale.

"Under these circumstances," she goes on, "don't you think it would be much better for you to secure a good certain income?"

"Unquestionably I do, but there's a difficulty that I've found insurmountable all my life about doing it."

"I will tell you how," she says, eagerly: "by marriage. There is Miss Finlay, Lady Fitzslater's only child; a sweet girl, with plenty of money; you're just the sort of man to win her if you set about it the right way."

"Miss Finlay is the young lady with eyes of the fashionable faded-leaf tint, and the rather opaque complexion, isn't she?"

"She's not exactly pretty," Lady Ellerdale is beginning, "but she's exceedingly—"

"Amiable I know you're going to say; well, at any rate we mean the same person. How is it that such a sweet, amiable girl has remained so long unwon?"

"I hear she has been very fastidious," Lady Ellerdale says, determining to carry her point if persuasion will do it.

"Dear girl! how good of her; perhaps her prophetic heart has told her to reserve herself for me; but do you know I hardly feel inclined to risk being bowled out one fine day as a bigamist."

He lays an emphasis which appears to be unpleasantly strong to Lady Ellerdale on the last word.

She however resolves not to notice it, but just to go on pressing her plan upon him.

"Take my advice, and see more of her before you decide," Lady Ellerdale urges, for she knows well that the gentle Georgie is quite ready to succumb to any man at the first advance. "Think of what a position you would have in society as Lady Fitzslater's son-in-law! She is a woman who is much sought and looked up to in spite of her little eccentricities."

"You see beauties and charms in everyone to-day; how amiable you have grown."

"I recognise worth, and admit that it exists whenever I meet with it," Lady Ellerdale says.

"And you recognise beauty, and admit it when it doesn't exist, such is the magnitude of your generosity. Well, introduce me to my future bride, and if possible I'll be tractable."

So it comes to pass that Mr. Cadogan stays on at Hesselton, and Miss Finlay feels that at last she is the heroine of a romance.

This Mr. Cadogan who has dropped from the clouds in among the well-authenticated Hesseltonians seems indeed an angel visitant to her.

He is a sufficiently striking and good-looking a man to command observation from most people, and admiration from all women.

He is cool and nonchalant in manner to a degree that justifies the statement Miss Finlay

presently feels called upon to make to the effect that he has always "moved in the best society." And he is evidently on terms of intimacy with Lady Ellerdale.

Miss Finlay is not at all superior to the weakness of worshipping a title, and Lady Ellerdale is indisputably a peeress, whatever she may have been previous to the coup by which she carried the Earl. Additionally, as the old song says:

Man is for woman made,
And woman's made for man.

And no other man having evinced any disposition to prove that he has been specially made for her, it is not to be wondered at that Georgie Finlay should hold herself in readiness to surrender her heart into his keeping at the slightest sign from him.

She is absolutely and unconditionally delighted with the condition of affairs, and with affected reticence and modesty pretends to be unconscious that "there is anything for people to talk about."

Truth to tell, the unattractive young woman ought to have every excuse made for the jubilant spirit she exhibits about this first "conquest" (as she assumes it to be) which she has ever made.

Life has been rather a dreary round to Miss Finlay, albeit her mother is Lady Fitzslater, and she is a baronet's daughter. In her own estimation she is a girl to whom all men ought to aspire.

In the estimation of men she has seemed to be held as something extremely undesirable. She has been obliged to possess her soul in patience for many years under the heavy trial of her mother's rasping temper.

Her only harbour of refuge has been Miss Classon, whom she inwardly distrusts, but without whose companionship her life would be desolation indeed.

Small wonder that she smiles blandly and a trifle too broadly upon the first man who has ever feigned to smile upon her.

But there are drawbacks to her felicity. Mr. Cadogan, though he sets himself steadily to the task assigned to him by Lady Ellerdale, of wooing and winning Miss Finlay, cordially, does not consider that loyalty forbids that he should pluck any other rose that may chance to come in his way as he passes.

It must be conceded that the Misses Letchford and Miss Classon do not bear any very strong resemblance to roses.

Nevertheless he finds them to the full as attractive as is the lady of his supposed choice. Therefore, in her absence, he tests the healthy energy of the "Letchford girls" by joining them in long country walks.

And finding that "the Classon" is quite as fair to the eye as her young mistress, and also that she possesses an amount of cunning which serves to amuse him, and almost stands in the place of intellect, he gives her what he calls "a turn" now and again, and leads her up to the giddy height of hoping that she may become Mrs. Cadogan.

Nor is it all plain sailing at home for the lovesick Georgie.

Desirous as old Lady Fitzslater is of seeing her only child safely settled at some distance apart from her, she cannot bring herself to regard Mr. Cadogan's claims as unassailable just yet.

From her motherly and matured point of view he looks the merest adventurer. His living at his ease at the Hesselton Inn is nothing in his favour.

"He may be a bagman," she says to Georgie, and when Georgie refutes that accusation by a timely reference to his eyes and nose, the patrician lines of which are, she declares, quite unmistakable, her mother replies:

"His eyes won't pay your milliner, my dear, and a glance at his nose will not be deemed sufficient compensation for the goods they deliver by the ordinary British tradesman; no, no, Georgie, let him come to me fairly and say what he is able and willing to settle upon you, and then I'll see about it."

This is a stumbling block in Miss Finlay's

otherwise all-glorious and triumphant path. She cannot actually order Mr. Cadogan to say to her mamma that he is ready and willing to marry and make settlements upon her.

All she can do she does valiantly, but there are limits, and though Lady Fitzslater goads, and Miss Classon jeers at her, she cannot quite bring herself to pass them.

He dines freely and frequently enough in the Fitzslater halls in these days, and suffers himself to be introduced into other people's houses by the objectionable, but tolerated old lady who hopes to become his mother-in-law.

But he cannot work himself up to the requisite pitch of ardour, and recklessly hurl himself at Miss Finlay's flat, and anything but pretty, feet, until he knows with a more certain knowledge that Georgie can gild the path he elects to tread with her.

Meanwhile there is a traitor in the camp.

"The Classon" has her views and hopes also, and strives to carry them out with a degree of heat, heart, and force that is not to be lightly combatted.

What to her is that empty word honour? What to her are the claims of gratitude?

She has herself to think of, she reminds herself, and she does think of herself and herself alone as she makes her onslaught on Mr. Cadogan.

"He must have money, or he couldn't live as he is living. He must have position, or he wouldn't be a friend of the Ellerdals," she argues.

And on this argument she erects her edifice of ambitious hopes.

It is nothing to him that she writes him furtive epistles, full to over-flowing of sentimental suggestions of friendship, which must, if he responds to them, speedily develop into something more.

These he can cast to the winds, and, to do him justice, he does so—in very small pieces.

But the woman seems to be ubiquitous in Hesselton, and her tact is so great that wherever she is he cannot say she ought not to be there.

And all the while she is so desperately affectionate and friendly, and frankly sincere with Georgie the lymphatic, Georgie the lethargic, that Miss Finlay believes she is carrying all things her own way, and that Miss Classon is assisting her in doing it.

"I'd just as soon marry one as the other," Cadogan frankly confesses to Lady Ellerdale. "They're both rather repulsive to me, but if one can pay her mess and the other can't you can guess which I shall choose."

"I wish you'd speak to Lady Fitzslater," is Lady Ellerdale's reply.

"Speak to Lady Fitzslater! Why should I? She'll speak to me fast enough, and then I shall be able to ask if Georgie will go to the man she blesses with her hand dowerless or not. Miss Finlay is not exactly the bride I should seek if money were no object; but it is an object at present, and I think you might aid a fellow in coming to a definite conclusion."

"I have thought only of your happiness in this matter throughout."

"I know that," he says, with sudden warmth and gratitude. "But, Geraldine, will you see me tied up to a woman like Miss Finlay without a qualm?"

"Your being tied up to her means safety—safety—safety! I have lived too long to relish living in risk any longer."

"So be it; but I won't believe that there's anything real about them but her mother's false teeth and her own false hair. Still, I'll propose to-morrow if you say, 'Do it.'"

"Do it."

"You're a shade more heartless than I thought you were. But never mind," he says, carelessly.

And Lady Ellerdale says no word in vindication of herself.

(To be Continued.)

DESIRE not more of the world than is necessary to accommodate you in passing through it.

THE AMERICAN WHEAT CROP.

THE harvest began in Missouri May 20, fully a month before the usual time. By the first of June the harvest season opened in Southern Illinois. The crop is magnificent throughout the entire country, and promises to be the largest ever gathered. The yield is estimated as high as 500,000,000 bushels. The movement of breadstuffs eastward of late has been unprecedented.

CONNIE'S SECRET.

A DAY of bitter, biting black frost—a leaden sky stretched like a pall over the huddled street, with the smoke of a hundred chimneys curling up against it, in shades of lighter grey—and Bell Brighton, looking wearily out, wondered what there was left, in all the world, to be worth living for.

"Pride must have a fall" said her step-mother, austere. "And I really don't see, Bell Brighton, what cause you have for complaint. If you had married John Wallace, when he asked you, you would have a home of your own. And I've always thought, Bell, though I don't say so, that your lame ankle is meant as a visitation of Providence, to punish you for all your pride and vain glory."

Mrs. Brighton, a tall and grim-visaged matron, with a coffee-coloured "front," chill blue eyes, and thin, compressed lips, was "doing-up" the family linen, at an ironing-table opposite the window, and lecturing her step-daughter at the same time; and as poor Isabel had a lame ankle and could not escape, she was decidedly at a disadvantage.

The room was shabby and faded—so was Mrs. Brighton.

The fire burned in a spiritless fashion, the geranium plants in the window had lost their leaves, and the canary had lost his voice. And over all brooded the dull, leaden sky of frozen March.

How long it seemed since that golden summer-day in blossoming June—that day of the picnic—when John Wallace asked her to be his wife, and she had laughed disdainfully in his face.

She was Miss Brighton of Brighton Farm then; her father had not lost his old homestead through the foreclosure of a mortgage; they were not living in a dismal "flat," and she had not broken her ankle and degenerated into a mere sickly invalid.

And there she sat all day, poor child, mending the boys' stockings, and trying to forget her pain in odd volumes of verses lent by sympathising neighbours, and listening to the shrill, never-ending tones of her step-mother, until sometimes she fancied she should go frantic.

For poor, spiritless Joshua Brighton it was not so bad; he had obtained a situation as a book-keeper in a gloomy little warehouse round the corner, which kept him out of the sound of his wife's tongue for at least a part of the day.

And Connie, Isabel's twin sister, was setting type in a neighbouring printing-office, and earned her own little income; so that she, also, was comparatively independent.

But poor Isabel, who was helpless and ailing, is it strange that she sometimes closed her eyes and asked herself, in bitterness of spirit, when all this was to end?

"Crying, Bell, dear?"

It was Connie's cheery voice; and Connie had come into the room like a fresh breeze, purifying the air, and, somehow, lifting the gloom from her sister's heart.

"She often does that, bless you," said Mrs. Brighton, drawing her iron vindictively against the buttons of Johnny's shirt. "I suppose she thinks it makes it cheerful for me! I don't need any consideration, working my finger-ends off for thankless friendless girls as isn't no relation to me."

But Bell only laid her flushed forehead against Connie's shoulder and wept quietly on.

"If I only had a piano, Connie," said she, "I think I could forget my troubles in practicing the old music I used to love."

"A piano!" echoed Mrs. Brighton. "Well, I declare. Why don't you wish for a carriage and pair, and a mansion, while you're about it? You're quite as likely to get one as you are the other. You'd a deal better wish for a new overcoat for your father, and boots for the boys."

"Would you like a piano, Bell?" said Connie, brightly. "Then I'll hire one for you. There's the dearest little cabinet concern at the second-hand shop round the corner, that I could get, I am sure, for a trifle a month, and there's plenty of room for it between the parlour chimney-piece and the window."

"But you can't afford it, Connie."

"Yes, I can," said Connie; "I've had a rise in the world. I'm not to set type any longer, but I am to read proofs, at nearly twice the wages. Oh, Bell, isn't it nice!"

But now came a succession of mysteries. Old Miss Marks, who knew one of the proprietors of the publishing concern, told Isabel that her sister was not employed after three o'clock in the proof-reading office; and yet Connie never came home until dark.

"I don't blame her for wanting to keep out of this untidy place, with mother scolding and the children quarrelling," thought Bell; "but she might tell me where she is and what she's doing. But Connie is changed of late."

The little cabinet piano, too, which Constance had promised her sister, never came; and one day, when little Billy Brighton, who had promised himself unlimited pleasure in surreptitiously pounding on the keys, noisily reminded Connie of her promise, she started and coloured.

"The cabinet piano?" said she. "Oh, yes, I remember. I did go down to see about it, but someone else had rented it."

"But there's more pianos than one, aint there?" hazarded Master Billy.

"Billy, do keep still, and leave off teasing," said Connie, sharply.

"Bell wouldn't cry so much, maybe, if she could play piano-music," persisted Billy.

Constance looked up with a start.

"Does she cry so much?" she said. "Poor Bell! Dear Bell!"

But nothing more was said about the piano, and Isabel came reluctantly to the conclusion that Connie, like all the rest of the world, was forgetting her.

Until the April violets purpled all the country slopes, and the star-disked dandelions blossomed out even between the kerb-stones of the city, and a great longing came over Isabel Brighton to see the meadows and vales once more.

"Connie," she said, timidly, one day, "you told me your wages had been raised."

"Yes," said Constance, who was poring over what looked like a receipted bill.

"Would it cost too much to hire a carriage and take me a little ride into the country? I sometimes think, Connie dear, I shall not live very long, and I should so like to see the cherry trees in blossom and all the woods turning green before I go."

Constance rose and came with suffused eyes to her sister's side.

"Bell," said she, "I was going to ask you to do that very thing. To-morrow, dear!"

So they went, all by themselves, greatly to the indignation of Mrs. Brighton, who thought that, at the very least, the three boys should have been invited, and that it wouldn't have hurt Constance to hire a double barouche and take their pa and ma, too, as never put their noses out of doors for a treat.

And Isabel's pale cheeks flushed, and her eyes sparkled with something of their old light, as they left the Bridge behind them and rolled out over the smooth, tree-fringed avenue into the wide, sweet, blossoming country beyond—until they reached a little Gothic cottage with an elm tree bending over it, and a view of the glittering river at the rear.

"This is my house, Bell," said Connie, radiantly; "and yours! I've rented it, dear, and furnished it, and we're to live here together."

And what a little nest it was, to be sure, with blue carpet on the floors, blue chintz curtains at the windows, the little cabinet piano in the parlour, and the softest of easy-chairs drawn up opposite the grate-fire; and as for the dainty little kitchen dresser, with its rows of crockery and shining coffee-pots, and yellow pudding-bowls, and the dining-room, with its sideboard no larger than a doll's furniture, and the piazza behind, and the beds of blue velvet pansies in front—there's no sort of use in trying to describe them; it couldn't be done.

"But, Connie, you never did this all by yourself!" cried Bell, when the first rapture was over. "You never could have afforded it?"

"No," said Connie; "I had help. John helped me, both with his purse and judgment."

"John Wallace?"

"Yes."

"I know!" cried out Bell, with a sharp pain as if a needle had pierced her heart. "You needn't tell me any more. John and you are to be married! You will be happy—while I—"

"Bell! Bell!" John Wallace himself stepped out from the shadow of the curtains, in the tiny bay window, and took both her hands in his. "You know very well that I shall never be married to anyone, unless it is to you! Speak, dearest, decide my fate at once!"

"But I am a poor, sickly cripple!" she hesitated.

"To me, Bell, you are what you always were—the dearest and sweetest thing in all the world," he answered, steadfastly.

And so Isabel Brighton was married, and three people live in the Gothic cottage instead of only two.

But what is strangest of all, is that the house was planned exactly for that state of things.

"She would have it so!" said John, with a mischievous glance at Connie.

"I knew things would all come right," said Connie, demurely.

"And that was your secret?" said Bell, half smiling, half tearful.

"This was my secret," Connie answered. "This was where the money and the time all went! And oh! Bell, I am so happy at last!"

A. B.

AT DIFFERENT HOURS.—Flowers of one climate do not open at the same hour in others. Thus, an African plant which opens at six o'clock, if removed to France will not open till nine, nor in Sweden till ten. Those which do not open in Africa till noon, do not open at all in Europe.

In connection with the visit of Her Majesty to Balmoral, it may be mentioned that a handsome new dwelling house, which has been in course of erection for Her Majesty near the Castle for the last two years, is now approaching completion. It is two storeys in height, and contains twenty apartments. The cost has been nearly £3,000.

It is not quite true that the price paid by the "Nineteenth Century" to Tennyson for his fine ballad of "The Revenge" is the highest paid in one time to a poet. The ballad contains 120 lines, and the author has received for it 300 gs., or £2 12s. 6d. a line. Mr. Robert Longfellow received, for the "Hanging of the Crane," £800. That poem contains 200 lines, at which rate the poet received 4s. a line. For "Tithonus," published in an early number of the "Cornhill Magazine," Tennyson received 100 gs., or £1 9s. a line, and Tom Moore much exulted in receiving a guinea a line.

VIRTUE, as the world goes, is sometimes ambitious—honourably ambitious; it is sometimes a little avaricious; it is sometimes a little selfish, it is sometimes a little proud; and it is sometimes a little stern; but love vaunteth not herself, is kind, unselfish, is meek, and is as mild as mercy.

THE INVISIBLE COMMODORE;

OR

THE SECRETS OF THE MILL.

CHAPTER XVII.

We must now go back to the moment when Governor Morrow and Essie made their escape from the pirate schooner, with the aid of Masterman, who had turned traitor to the pirates in his own interest, as related, and as will soon be further apparent.

Grim and still was the night, and gradually a dull sense of unrest was writing itself upon the face of nature.

The slumbering sea, the dark and breathless heavens, the shoreless waste that dimly outlined itself within the compass of their troubled vision—all tended to inspire the fugitive father and daughter with an awe akin to terror.

Yet they were free! lost in the still darkness! and no sound of warning and alarm had yet arisen behind them!

"There will be high old Neptune to pay to-night, Governor," whispered Masterman, over the bow of the boat, when he had dragged it a quarter of a mile from the spot where the schooner still lay so motionless. "This calm is not an ordinary one, sir; it is the lull that precedes a tempest. I have been in these latitudes a long time, and am familiar with the signs that invariably precede a severe sou'-easter. We are in the season of hurricanes, too, which is from August to November."

He rested a moment or two longer, as Governor Morrow assented to his view of the weather, and then he climbed into the boat.

"The sea is so still, Governor," he resumed, in a barely audible voice, seizing an oar, "that I do not like to begin rowing quite so soon, or before we are at a much greater distance from the schooner. But, on the other hand, these waters are pretty generally peopled with sharks, and I have already run no little risk of having my legs snapped off by them."

He set to work accordingly.

"How kind and generous of you!" Essie could not help exclaiming, in a voice tremulous with emotion. "How can we ever pay you for this immense service?"

"I am already more than paid, Miss Morrow," was Masterman's quick response. "The least word of thanks from your lips is more than a full reward for all I have done for you. Besides, I have not been thinking of rewards, but have simply performed a duty."

"We are greatly your debtors, sir, of course," assured Governor Morrow. "But your remarks strike me as a little odd, considering that they come from a man of your profession."

"Oh, as to that, sir," returned Masterman, "I have not been with these people of my own free will, but was forced into their service, and have only been looking for a good chance of escape. True, Governor, the present was not a good opportunity, but it was a good occasion for me to lend you a helping hand, and this consideration inspired me with a resolution to escape with you to-night, or to perish in the attempt."

"You have our best thanks, be assured, sir," said the governor. "But—I cannot help noticing the contrast between your present attitude and that you assumed a few days ago aboard of the 'Alliance,' when you interrupted my proposed voyage to Europe."

"Ah, Governor, that is not such a contradiction as you suppose," assured Masterman, glibly. "I knew, you see, that there would be trouble at Barbadoes for Mr. Clyde and Miss Morrow. Are you not glad that your voyage was interrupted? Wouldn't you sooner be here at this moment than on your way to England?"

"I would indeed!"

"You see, then, that I have been consulting your real interests, so far as I could, sir," declared Masterman, smiling contentedly at the ready assurance which had come to him. "I meant it all for your good, sir."

"Then I will venture to ask for a little further information, Mr. Masterman," said the governor, thoughtfully. "Where is Captain Chuddley?"

"He's aboard of the 'Alliance,' which is on its way to our retreat, and probably at no great distance from us at this very moment!"

"But where is 'our retreat,' sir?"

"On the Spanish Main, not far to the eastward of Cape Vela," answered Masterman, with a promptness that was at least suspicious.

"And what was that cannon we heard a short time before sundown?"

"A signal from the 'Alliance,' sir, signifying that everything is lovely."

A pause succeeded, during which the governor whispered to Essie that he did not put the least confidence in these declarations, for reasons he would fully set forth to her at the first opportunity.

During this pause, too, Masterman continued to row quietly and almost noiselessly, with a steadiness which attested that he was bound for some particular destination.

"I suppose you know where we are, friend?" asked the governor.

"Perfectly, sir," replied the plotter. "We are about a mile and a half to the southward of the island of Oruba, off the coast of Venezuela. It is upon this island that we must seek refuge until the pirates have disappeared from the vicinity—a few days more or less. Of course, a search will be made for us, but I have been here before, as already indicated, and do not have the least fear of being discovered by the pursuers. The island is wholly uninhabited, and is densely wooded, besides having numerous caves among the hills of the interior, one or two of which caves are known only to myself."

"One question more, sir, if you please," said Essie. "Was not Mr. Clyde a prisoner aboard of the schooner, confined in a cage in the hold, in fact, as during his former captivity?"

Masterman peered through the gloom intently, flashing a gleam of light from his ears, in the hope of reading the countenance of our heroine, and so giving himself some idea of the knowledge she possessed in the premises, but he could not make out anything by this process, and so was compelled to answer, for fear of making a radical blunder:

"Yes, miss, Major Clyde is a prisoner on the schooner!"

"Father and I thought so," breathed Essie, with a sigh resembling a groan, "but we were watched by that old negress and the dwarf so closely that we had no opportunity to make the least investigation. Do you know how Mr. Clyde is treated? Is he in any immediate danger? Will our escape be revenged upon him?"

"I am glad to answer all these questions to your satisfaction, miss," replied Masterman, lying as glibly as before. "The false major is simply holding Major Clyde in safe-keeping, to exchange him against one of the pirate captains who has fallen into the hands of Admiral Rennel."

"Indeed! Then his life and liberty are alike guaranteed?" murmured Essie, with a voice expressive of the keenest relief.

"There's no doubt of the fact, miss—not the least doubt whatever. I know that Major Clyde is perfectly safe!"

"But who is the false major, Mr. Masterman, if I may ask another question?" demanded the governor. "I'd like to know who that man really is."

"So would I, sir."

"What! don't you know who he is?" cried Essie, in astonishment.

"No, miss, I haven't the least idea who he is! There is not a single man under him who can answer that question."

"But— isn't he Captain Mallet?"

"No, sir, Captain Mallet is another man alto-

gether. This much I can tell you. But as to the false major's identity, no man can give you any information. It's all a mystery."

A wondering-silence naturally fell upon the father and daughter at these unexpected declarations.

Then they began speculating between themselves as to the whereabouts and identity of the man in question.

They were thus engaged when the boat, propelled with constantly increasing vigour by Masterman, arrived off a shore which was defined with sufficient clearness by the swell breaking in phosphorescent gleams upon it.

"Here we are," said Masterman, resting a moment on his oars. "This is Oruba Island. There is not a soul upon it—and the fact is rather for us than against us, as there will be no danger of our betrayal to the parties who will hunt us to-morrow."

"Another thing, there are plenty of fruits growing wild here, to say nothing of the fish and oysters, that may be had without trouble, and hence we are not in the least danger of starving, whether we are obliged to stay here one week or twenty!"

He rowed on gently, directing the boat into a deep and narrow creek, with rocky and bushy sides, and thus advancing quite a distance into the interior of the island.

Then, still guided by the phosphorescent gleams on each side of him, he beached the boat on a gravelly shore between two jagged points, and assisted the governor and Essie to land.

"I will hide the boat later," observed Masterman, "at a point a quarter of a mile further up the creek. I do not say that I can hide it beyond the possibility of being found, but I will do my best, covering it with bushes. Without it, of course, we should not be able to leave the island, and we might pass a long life here without catching a glimpse of a passing vessel."

"You had better hide the boat at once, then," suggested the governor. "My daughter and I will wait here until your return."

"All right, sir—if you will not be uneasy."

Returning to the boat, he ascended the creek rapidly, soon passing from view and hearing.

"A curious series of adventures, my dear child," said the governor, embracing Essie. "Pirates get us into trouble, and a pirate gets us out again—or into deeper trouble. Heaven alone knows which. This man is a fraud, of course. We cannot believe a word he says. Captain Chuddley says he really has a commission made out to Masterman, and it is equally clear that there was a Masterman in the service who was ordered to report to Chuddley for duty. So much is beyond question. But Chuddley has now no doubt, he told me, that the real Masterman was killed years ago, and that this man is, like the major's double, merely some prominent pirate who has availed himself of the real Masterman's papers to step into the dead man's shoes."

"Indeed! This is astounding!"

"But common enough, my child," said the governor, decidedly. "I now see that at least a number of our supposed naval officers in the West Indies are pirates in disguise. This is certainly the case with this man. We must not believe a word he says on any subject, and you may be sure that I shall keep a watchful eye upon him. What he is really driving at it is impossible to say, but I think he has quarrelled with the other rogue, and has assisted us to our freedom rather to spite his adversary than to favour us."

Various other suspicions and suggestions were exchanged between the couple, and they had even conceived sundry doubts of the good faith of Masterman's prolonged absence, when he came wading down the creek, under the edge of the overhanging branches.

"I hope you are not getting uneasy, friends," he said. "I have been a little longer than I intended—on account of the darkness. And now for our arrangements for the night. Not more than half a mile inland there is a secret cave which I believe to be known only to me, as I have already suggested. I propose to you to

take possession of that cave until morning, or as long as may be necessary."

"We shall, of course, follow your advice and lead," replied Governor Morrow. "It is fortunate for us that you have wandered over the island at some period of your life, and become so well posted about it. We shall depend upon you to hide us so safely that the false major will never find us."

"You may be sure that he never will," affirmed Masterman, in a tone of voice that left no doubt of his sincerity and determination. "Allow me to light a torch or two to show us our way inland to the cave in question. There is no danger of our torches being seen from the sea at this spot or at any point of our route, and there is not a soul on the island to molest us. The situation might be worse, you see, governor."

The governor assented, and looked on in silent satisfaction while Masterman produced a tinder-box and proceeded to make a fire. Some dry pieces of wood were soon in a blaze, and the trio thus supplied themselves with the torches necessary to show them their way to their proposed destination.

"The walk will not be a difficult one for even Miss Morrow," assured Masterman, taking the advance, "and there is nothing to harm us—no wild beasts of any kind, but plenty of game, some specimens of which we will contrive, no doubt, to secure in the morning for our breakfast."

Thus encouraging the governor and his daughter, the pirate led the way over rocks and through woods, crossing several brackish rivulets, and gradually plunging into a region as rugged and solitary as anything they had ever seen.

Indeed, the solitude around them eventually became oppressive.

The father and daughter were beginning to exhibit signs of weariness, as well as to exchange suspicions, when their guide halted at the edge of a curious torrent, descending in a deep gorge from some hills of considerable elevation.

"This is the gate to our cave," announced Masterman, flashing his torch around him. "We ascend the bank of this torrent about fifty yards, and then we come to the mouth of the cavern. Shall I not help you, Miss Morrow?"

"No, I thank you," replied Essie. "Please lead the way, sir; father and I will follow."

A minute later, the fugitives were in a large and roomy cave, which seemed to extend into the hill to an indefinite extent, and to be subdivided into various apartments of greater or less dimensions.

"It doesn't seem to me to be so difficult to reach it," commented Governor Morrow, looking around. "But, of course, the pirates will hardly stumble upon us before morning."

"Nor then, either," assured Masterman. "Let us first build a good fire, and then we will build up nice beds, in these corridors, of boughs and bushes. It will be easy for us to make ourselves as comfortable here as we are safe!"

These suggestions were duly carried out. Within half an hour after reaching the cavern the trio presented a picture of positive comfort as they reclined around a large fire which had been kindled in the midst of the principal cave, and busily discussed their situation and their projects for the morrow.

It was not long, of course, before Essie and the governor began to show signs of fatigue and sleepiness, as was natural after the long vigils they had kept aboard of the pirate schooner. They accordingly bestowed themselves, in due time, in the little niches they had selected for their resting-places, Masterman declaring that he was as wide awake as ever, and that it was his intention to watch all night at the mouth of the cavern.

He went forth, in fact, to gather a supply of fuel sufficient to last all night, and when he returned, the heavy and regular breathing of the father and daughter attested that they were wrapped in the deepest slumber.

"Good!" said Masterman, to himself, after watching and listening a full minute, and sending snaky glances in every direction around him. "The hour is at hand for action! The old man is in the way! He shall die as he sleeps! Sleep on, proud beauty!" and he looked to his pistols. "You will have a terrible awakening!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

It was clear enough now that Masterman had his own views of the situation, and was busy with his own projects.

Dropping into an easy attitude before the fire that was illuminating and warming the great cavern, he stared thoughtfully into the flames, looking like the incarnation of intended murder.

"If I were not what I am!" he breathed, shivering like a man with an ague.

He had long since reached that point in life which comes to every professional criminal—the hour when he realises that he has passed even the possibility of repentance and reform, and that he is not only an outcast from society, but from all that is good and honest.

"If things were different!" he muttered, audibly, a minute later.

It is only just to say that there was in his soul, at that moment, a keen appreciation of all he had lost, and all he was debarred from.

Yes; he would have given his right hand if he could have annihilated all those terrible years in which he had been a pirate, and be again what he was when he first went forth into the world from the paternal homestead.

"But what's the use of talking?" he mused, as his wild eyes looked in the direction in which Governor Morrow and Essie were sleeping. "There is no ascending from the depths to which I have descended! That innocent girl knows that I am an outcast and villain of the deepest dye. If I were to woo her a thousand years she would never have any other sentiment for me than a feeling of contempt and fear. What could I do to make her love me? What service could I render her that would even incline her to pity? I am not such an idiot as to seek to win her affection or respect. Those are results entirely out of the question. The powers of the wolf and the tiger are the only resources at my disposal. But since such is the case, I will use them!"

He had thus arrived, by due process of reasoning, at the identical view to which he had been led by instinct, and which has been previously indicated.

He could not be a man, kind, humane, disinterested, and honourable; he could only be, henceforth, the wild beast he had been in the past—murderous, remorseless, terrible!

And the very intelligence which enabled him to take this view of himself made him all the more deadly and sinister. He was consciously a demon.

"The case is thus as clear as the fire before me," he said to himself, as a fierce look of resolution hardened his face. "I shall make no further attempt to play goody-goody to the governor and his daughter. They see through all my little falsehoods, and would continue to do so to the end of the chapter. All there is about it, that girl has turned my head, and there being no way to win her by fair means, why—I must take the only course that is left me."

He arose briskly, as if the last shadow of hesitancy had vanished from his mind.

"How soundly they sleep," he breathed, listening and glancing around him. "How many years have passed since I slept like that! My sleep is troubled with all sorts of horrors and unearthly shapes—perhaps with the very demons that are ordained to be my tormentors in the great hereafter. Bah! what am I saying? As a man dies, so dies a beast. All that is left of a man when death overtakes him is his carcass! Were it otherwise those dead men on the shore yonder would certainly cause me to tremble!"

As his thoughts thus came back to the numerous victims of his greed, a new idea seemed to strike him.

"I ought to take a look in that direction, and see what has become of the schooner," he muttered. "And I will."

Taking a torch from the fire, he went out of the cave, plunging into the woods in a direction at right angles to that by which he had come, he having avoided the scene of the great tragedy, as was necessary, on bringing the father and daughter to the island.

The torch lasted him as long as he deemed it prudent to use it, and when he threw it away he was so near the sandy beach he was seeking, that he had no difficulty in making his way to it.

He was just in the act of emerging from the edge of the bushes, when loud and excited voices upon the strand reached his hearing, and the sudden flash of a light met his gaze.

Halting in the dense gloom, he looked in the direction indicated, listening intently.

He had arrived at this spot at the very moment when the false major and the men with him were viewing the dead bodies and giving voice to their wild excitement.

"You see how it is, men?" the false major was saying, in a voice that was husky with intense passion. "Our men have all been murdered, including Masterman, and the assassins have stolen our money! They may have been white men, or they may have been Caribs. In any case, they must have been strong-handed, to kill a dozen of our men, and not leave a solitary specimen of themselves behind them. And this is as much as to say that we are likely to be killed here at any moment. There is no use of looking further to-night. Let's be off to the schooner, since no sign of trouble has reached us from that direction. Fortunately we have found one of the two boats, which we will take with us, and if the wind should really freshen—as is half promised—we may at least save ourselves from the cruisers."

The concealed watcher continued to listen and look until the little party had bestowed itself in the two boats and pushed off, and then he turned back into the bushes with expressions of an exultation that was truly infernal.

"Nothing could be better!" he muttered. "They think I am dead, and that the treasure has been stolen by Caribs or other outsiders! It is jolly! Very little search will be made for the money, and very little good would searching do them, so well have I selected the place of burial, all trace of which is already obliterated by the rising tide. And so I remain unsuspected and in full possession!"

(To be Continued.)

AVOID MISTAKES.

A LARGE part of most human lives is taken up with efforts to rectify mistakes which a little forethought would have avoided. And this is true of persons who have never intended to do anything that was not right. They have erred through thoughtlessness; but what misery one thoughtless act, or even a thoughtless word, may occasion! The regrets of a lifetime may make but poor amends for what a few moments of reflection beforehand might have avoided.

The great John Randolph of Roanoke was a patriot-statesman who had led a seemingly irreproachable life; yet when stretched on the bed of death, he asked for a pen, and wrote one word—"Remorse."

There is in this, as in almost everything else, much in the force of habit. If young men will cultivate the habit of thinking before they act, they will be far less liable to fall into some mistake which may embitter their whole after life.

It does no harm to think before acting in every case, and it may save one from immeasurable annoyance and sorrow.

Avoid mistakes. Fix this in your mind. Let it be one of your mottoes, always to be observed, and it will greatly diminish the number of mistakes you will make.

LOUIS, THE PAGE; OR, The Lovers of Lady Alice.

LADY ALICE STRATFORD sat in one of the elegant chambers of Strathford Castle, in company with her distinguished friend and guest, the Countess of Landerlock.

The Lady Alice was not only young and beautiful, but as proud as a queen, and as noble as she was beautiful.

Having been early deprived of that parental care which enables young maidens to abjure all solicitude for their own growth and development, she had seemed to spring into glorious womanhood from the very ashes of her infancy.

As a matter of course, her hand was much sought after by youthful masculines nobility, and, as a matter of course, her hand was not to be had for the mere asking.

The Countess of Landerlock was her dearest friend—a sort of motherly counsellor and protector, who, having passed the middle of life, and having reared children of her own, was well qualified to take that position towards her ladyship.

"It is not at all plain to me what your words imply," observed Lady Alice, after listening to a somewhat ambiguous speech from her friend.

"Then I will be more explicit," returned the countess. "You have so many suitors that you do not find it an easy matter to decide which one it would be proper to accept; and I am afraid you have been thoughtless enough to encourage two of them instead of only one."

Lady Alice coloured a little, but looked honestly surprised.

"I would not do anything so dishonourable as that," she said.

"I know you would not intentionally," was the elder lady's reply. "But you know you favoured Sir Robert Deane before he went away, and now—"

"And now?"

"Lord Townsend is in the van."

Lady Alice looked thoughtfully at the golden bracelet which she was turning round and round on her white arm, and coloured more deeply than before.

"I admit that I once favoured Sir Robert Deane," she answered, at length, "but I thought you knew it was all over between us."

"You did not quarrel with him, my dear?"

"Quarrel!" with a haughty intonation. "Do you fancy I would demean myself by quarrelling with one who has no earthly right to question my motives in any course I choose to pursue? Sir Harry was too presumptuous on slight favour. He dared to impugn the propriety of my conduct in dancing with Lord Townsend at the prince's ball, after he had requested me not to do so."

"And you snubbed him?"

"I gave him to understand that when I wished him to act as my guardian I would let him know."

"He went away, then?"

"He left England, and for more than a year I have neither seen nor heard of him. How you can imagine I am encouraging him is quite an enigma to me."

The Countess of Landerlock looked exceedingly grave.

"I thought you and Robert were on the same terms now that you were before he went away. I am sorry it is not so, for you know he was always a pet of mine. I am sure he did not mean to be presumptuous, but only desired to do you a service. At any rate, he is worth more than a hundred such men as Lord Townsend."

"You are prejudiced."

"I speak what I believe to be the truth,

Alice. Pray do not let your pride stand in the way of your better feelings. It is considered an honour to be in the good graces of Lord Townsend, because he is rich and popular, but I have reason to know that he is a bad man at heart, and I earnestly advise you to dismiss him from your thoughts for ever. Dark stories have been told about him, especially of his conduct when travelling on the Continent two years ago. One of them is that of an innocent young girl whom he cruelly deceived and deserted—"

"Nonsense!" interrupted Lady Alice, with a scornful gesture. "It is folly to put faith in such silly stories. I hope you do not believe them, my dear countess. At all events, the subject is growing tiresome, so let us drop it."

She rose and took a turn across the room, her rich purple robes trailing after her in rustling billows.

"By the way, you have not seen my new page," she added, putting her hand on the bell-cord. "You must see him, by all means. He is such an interesting little fellow."

She rang the bell, and in a few minutes the page appeared.

He bowed low as he entered the room, first to his mistress and then to the countess, and drew his little form up to its fullest height as he awaited his orders.

He was apparently fourteen or fifteen years of age, yet a second glance showed such an intelligent, self-possessed, and matured look on his young face that one could easily imagine him several years older.

His features were almost classical in their mould.

His eyes were large and soft as a woman's, while his dark brown hair fell about his shoulders in a luxuriant mass.

He was attired in a rich, fantastic costume, the character of which dated back to the reign of King Charles.

Lady Alice amused herself and the countess by putting questions to the page, whose name was Louis, just to hear his witty and ever-ready answers.

He was undeniably an interesting boy, and the countess was very pleased with him.

Later in the day, when the countess was enjoying her siesta in a darkened chamber of the castle, Lady Alice took the opportunity to call up a few memories of the past.

She first produced from its secret hiding-place a crumpled note, which she read with as much apparent interest as if she had never seen it before.

The substance of the note was as follows:

"I NEED not say here that I love you. With a man's propensity for betraying what he most desires to conceal, I know too well that I have sometimes worn my heart on my sleeve when in your presence. If I loved you less I might not be weak enough to leave England, but, as it is, I cannot stay to see myself supplanted by that man. I once more swear to you that my only motive in warning you against Lord Townsend was an honest desire to befriend you, and I have been deeply pained by your persistence of believing me of a less worthy motive. When you told me, in your anger, that my own manners might be improved by copying those of Lord Townsend, I could not fail to understand that he was my successful rival. I could have endured anything but that, but now it only remains for me to say farewell for ever—and Heaven bless you!"

The signature to this note was "Robert Deane," and when Lady Alice reached it a sigh trembled across her lips, and she even brushed a tear from her eye.

But her inordinate pride came to her aid an instant later, and as she returned the crumpled sheet to the drawer whence she had taken it she said to herself:

"I need not give way to sentimental emotions at this late day. He will return to England sooner or later. If I have not accepted Lord Townsend in the meantime he will have the presumption to believe that I love him after all. I do love him—Heaven knows how madly I love him—but I can never let him know it after what



[MY LADY'S PAGE.]

I said to him that night—never! I will marry Lord Townsend, and give him to understand that his 'farewell for ever' made no impression upon me."

She went out of the house, and began walking to and fro on one of the marble terraces, wondering to herself if she could ever be happy as Lord Townsend's wife.

But whether she could or not she felt that she could not humiliate herself in Sir Robert's eyes by letting him see that she cared enough for him to remain single on his account.

While she was thus musing Louis, the page, confronted her, hat in hand.

"Well?" she demanded, almost sharply.

"A message for my lady," said the boy, holding out a white missive. "It was brought, my lady, by Lord Townsend's valet, from his master."

"Does he wait for an answer?"

"He does, my lady."

"Follow."

She turned, and entered the house through an open window.

Louis followed obediently in her footsteps.

She went to her own room before she opened the letter.

It was brief and soon perused.

Having read it to the end, Lady Alice stood irresolute for some moments.

Her hands were tightly clasped, and her white brow contracted.

The page stood near the door, waiting in decorous silence.

She seemed to forget his presence, for she said, in an audible tone:

"I said I would marry him, and I will!"

She sat down at her escritoire, and took up a pen.

She hesitated.

A look of anguish came into her white, beautiful face.

She put down the pen, and rose slowly to her feet.

"Not to-day," she murmured. "I cannot do it to-day. Go, Louis, and tell Lord Townsend's messenger that his master shall have an answer to-morrow."

Louis disappeared.

Lady Alice was not herself the rest of that day.

Even the countess did not dream of the weight that was on her mind.

She was pale and nervous, but managed to laugh whenever the countess told her she looked troubled.

And when she found it necessary to make some excuse for her unusual pallor she intimated that she was suffering from a slight attack of neuralgia.

The next morning she was still pale, but cold, calm and haughty.

She passed the morning with the countess, but as soon as she could get a half hour to herself she went to her room and wrote an answer to Lord Townsend's letter.

She signed her name with a steady hand, and was in the act of sealing the missive when a voice said:

"My lady, you are doing something which you will regret to your dying day."

She started and looked up.

Louis, the page, had entered the room unheard.

He was standing there in his usual deferential attitude, looking her straight in the face. She rose to her feet, her face flushing.

"I did not ring," she exclaimed, sharply.

"No, my lady; I came uncalled," said Louis, respectfully. "Allow me to repeat that you are doing something you will never cease to regret."

Amazement at this unparalleled audacity fairly silenced the lady for a moment.

Then she cried out:

"Rascal! slave! Why do you come to me with such words on your lips?"

"Because I wish to save your ladyship from disgrace and misery. You are giving your hand to a villain, who will ruin your happiness so completely that you can never recover it on this side of the grave."

The lady's eyes blazed.

"Merciful heaven!" she ejaculated. "Who am I, that I must be spoken to in this manner by a servant? Get out of my sight? Go—go!"

Louis dropped on his knees in front of his enraged mistress.

"Pardon me!" he pleaded, in tremulous tones.

"Pray forgive me this once, my lady. It is because I love you that I spoke as I did. I—I forgot myself. Please do not send me away."

Lady Alice looked down at the kneeling figure, and the passion gradually went out of her face.

"Rise," she said, in an altered tone, "and do not let this happen again. Here, carry this letter to Lord Townsend, and deliver it to him in person."

Louis took the missive, and bowed himself out.

There was an odd expression on his young face as he mounted his pony and galloped up the highway towards "The Towers," as Lord Townsend's place was called.

"I must defeat him somehow," he muttered, with a desperate resolve reflected in his gleaming eyes. "He shall not make a wreck of her life, though I be compelled to steep my hands in blood to save her."

The look was still on his face as he dashed up to "The Towers," and dismounted.

He entered the house.

His orders being to deliver the message in person, he refused to entrust it to a servant, but demanded to be shown into his lordship's presence.

This could not be done, however, without the usual preliminaries, so Louis was left alone in a little waiting-room, while the servant posted off to apprise his master of the messenger's errand.

Louis stood by the open window, gazing thoughtfully out towards Strathford Castle.

"Shall I make myself known to him?" he mused. "He is desperate enough to murder me if he finds out that I am standing between him and the accomplishment of his purpose. But—yes, I will save Lady Alice, or die in the attempt."

The footman re-appeared in the doorway at that moment.

"His lordship will see you in the library," he said.

Louis followed the man, and was ushered into the grand library of Lord Townsend.

The young lord sat there.

He was a handsome man, of splendid physique, an intellectual head, thin lips, and keen, penetrating eyes.

"Lord Townsend," he said, in a clear, steady voice, "I have brought you a message from Lady Alice Strathford, but before I deliver it I wish you to look at me, and tell me if I am recognised."

The lord gave a nervous start when the boy commenced speaking.

He stared at him in dignified surprise as he proceeded.

"What do you mean, idiot?" he demanded, gruffly.

"I mean if you do not know me you shall know me!" returned Louis.

And his eyes flashed.

Lord Townsend at last began to look really alarmed.

Truth to tell, this boy's face had haunted him strangely from the first moment he had seen it.

Every time it appeared before him he was reminded of certain epochs in his past life which he would fain forget.

But he replied, sternly:

"Boy, your mistress shall be informed of your impudence. Of course I know you. Have I not seen you often enough? You are Lady Alice's page, Louis, and a most unworthy one you are proving yourself."

A bitter smile wreathed the boy's lips.

"You know me only as Louis, the page. You shall know me better. Look you, Lord Townsend; can you tell me how I came by this scar? Do you remember a time five years ago in Paris, when you struck your ruined and helpless victim to the earth for daring to ask mercy at your hands?"

He came close to the lord as he spoke, and pushing up the brown locks that fell over his white brow, disclosed a purple scar extending diagonally across the upper portion of his forehead.

The effect on Lord Townsend was like an electric shock.

He leaped to his feet with a hoarse exclamation.

"You!" he ejaculated, his face growing ashy pale. "You here! What does this mean? Are you mad?"

"It is not your fault if I am not," replied the page. "What I have suffered at your hands would have driven a weaker mind into hopeless insanity."

"Idiot!" exclaimed Townsend, partially recovering himself. "What rash purpose brings you here in this disguise?"

"I came to England for revenge!" returned Louis, hissing the last word through his clenched teeth. "But for the present, my only object is to save Lady Alice from your power. You sent her a written proposal yesterday, and here is your answer," holding out the message with which his mistress had entrusted him. "I have every reason for believing that this is an acceptance, and duty compels me to deliver it to you. But, by the Heaven above us, Lord Townsend, unless you write to my lady that you have changed your mind, and cannot marry her under any circumstances, since you are already a married man, I will reveal what I know of your villany!"

Lord Townsend grew purple about the lips, and his eyes blazed like coals of fire.

"You will never do that!" he shouted, fiercely. "If you are here to stand between me and the accomplishment of my designs, you will never succeed. You are in my house now—and you will never leave it alive!"

He uttered the last sentence in a tone of hellish triumph and sprung toward the boy as if to seize him.

Louis carried a jewel-hilted dagger at his side, after the fashion of former-time pages, and, quick as thought, he snatched this from its sheath.

"Back!" he cried, in a ringing voice. "Dare but lay the weight of a finger upon me, and I will plunge the steel into your wicked heart!"

His whole manner showed that he was desperately in earnest.

The enraged lord stood stock-still and glared at him like a wild beast.

"You little jackanapes!" he exclaimed, with an oath. "I will be even with you yet!"

He turned suddenly and seized a silken bell cord, which he began to jerk with all his might.

At the same time he began to shout in stentorian tones:

"Ho, there! Samuel! David! Michael! Lock the doors, and don't let this page escape!"

Quick, for your lives! Seize him—seize him!"

"Louis comprehended the meaning of this, and realised that his only chance of escape lay in flight.

He turned suddenly, and darted out of the library like a shot.

Half-a-dozen liveried servants were rushing through the hall to answer their master's call, and seeing the youth emerge from the library with a knife in his hand, two of them tried to intercept him.

But, with surprising agility, he darted under their arms, eluded their grasp, and sped onward toward the great portal.

"Stop him! Hold him!" roared Lord Townsend, striding down the hall. "A hundred pounds to the man who will capture that boy and bring him back to me!"

Out of the house sped Louis, and after him sped the minions of the cruel lord, each and every one of them intent on winning the hundred pounds.

But Louis reached his pony, and vaulted into the saddle.

Then, with a shout of defiance, he dashed away with a headlong gait, laying his riding-whip about the animal's flanks with merciless energy.

But it happened that Lord Townsend's own black steed was standing in front of the castle, saddled and bridled, for this was the hour when Townsend took his daily rides. Observing the horse, the young noble leaped upon his back, hatless and coatless as he was, and dashed after the page, leaving the astonished servants in the rear.

Louis now saw that his position was a desperate one.

His little animal was no match for his enemy's powerful steed.

Yet there was still one hope—the hope of receiving help before he was overtaken.

He reached the highway, and turned his pony's head toward Strathford Castle.

But just then the race came to an abrupt end.

The pony stumbled and fell.

The page was hurled over his head, striking the ground so violently that he was stunned, and lay senseless in the road.

This would have been the moment of Lord Townsend's triumph had it not been for a happy chance, which seemed like an intervention of Providence.

A strange horseman was riding leisurely along the road.

He was a witness to the race, and saw the boy fall.

He reached the spot, leaped to the ground and lifted the insensible page in his arms. At the same moment he turned round so as to face Lord Townsend, thrusting his hand in his bosom as if he would draw a weapon. He was a handsome, noble-looking young man, with a splendid form, and a frank, trustworthy countenance.

Townsend drew rein, and sat motionless in his saddle, as if uncertain what to do. He evidently concluded it would not be prudent to continue his persecution of the boy, for, after a moment's hesitation, he wheeled his horse around and galloped back to The Towers.

"There has been devilry going on here," muttered the stranger, looking down at the boy's fair face. "I must bring this lad around, if possible. He may be dangerously hurt."

But at that moment Louis opened his eyes, and looked up into the man's face with a bewildered, half-startled expression. Then he struggled free from the strong arms that supported him.

"Be careful, my boy," cautioned the stranger, retaining a firm hold on the page's hand. "You are hurt, and you must let me care for you."

"Where is he?" demanded Louis, looking wildly around.

"If you mean the man who was pursuing you, he turned back," replied the stranger. "You have nothing to fear, my dear fellow; you are perfectly safe, unless you received severe injuries from your fall."

"I am not hurt," said Louis, "I may be slightly bruised—nothing more."

"Why was that man pursuing you?"

"I cannot tell you, sir. Please do not ask me. He is my bitterest foe, and I am very grateful to you for saving me—"

"Never mind that. What is his name?"

"Lord Townsend."

The stranger started, and bit his lip.

"Lord Townsend," he muttered. "I thought his features seemed familiar. That is his house then—The Towers. By my soul, I have blundered into the vicinity of Strathford Castle without knowing it! And who are you, my boy?" he added, aloud.

"I am Louis, the page of Lady Alice Strathford. Adding, after a moment's pause, "I must go now. I have been to The Towers on an errand for my lady. Indeed, sir, I cannot express my gratitude for the service you have rendered me."

He moved toward his pony, which had risen to its feet and was waiting for him to remount.

But the moment he seated himself in the saddle, he discovered that the animal had lamed itself in the fall, and could not move out of a walk.

He turned a pleading glance toward the stranger.

"Sir, will you be kind enough to ride a short distance with me? I am not yet out of danger. I shall be obliged to ride so slowly that my enemy may easily overtake me."

The man acquiesced, and up toward Strathford Castle they slowly rode, side by side. They had proceeded half the distance when a carriage was seen approaching from the opposite direction, drawn by two prancing horses.

"It is my lady," said the page.

"Do you mean Lady Alice?" questioned the stranger, beginning to draw in his rein.

"Lady Alice and her friend, the Countess of Landerlock," answered Louis.

For an instant the young man hesitated, as if meditating a retreat.

Then a bitter smile curled his moustached lip, and he seemed to resign himself recklessly to the consequences of the chance encounter. They rode forward and met the carriage. The two ladies recognised the stranger simultaneously. Lady Alice gave a slight start, and a momentary pallor swept across her beautiful face; but by no other sign did she show that she was moved.

The Countess of Landerlock burst forth with an exclamation of mingled surprise and delight.

"Why, it is Sir Harry Deane!"

The carriage stopped.

Sir Harry lifted his hat with a low bow to the ladies.

"This is an unexpected pleasure," he said.

"Entirely unexpected on our part," said the countess. "We had no idea you were nearer than China, or the North Pole."

"We were wondering but yesterday if you had deserted England for ever," remarked Lady Alice, merely for the sake of saying something.

"I could not be so base, I assure you," and Sir Robert smiled as merrily as if his heart were not almost suffocating him with its wild pulsations.

The conversation went on rapidly. Neither Sir Robert nor Lady Alice dared to let it flag for a moment.

Much surprise and indignation was expressed when the page recounted certain portions of the adventure he had just met with, and the countess was especially energetic in heaping feminine anathemas upon the luckless head of Lord Townsend.

Lady Alice ordered her coachman to turn about, and invited Sir Robert to accompany them back to the house.

He had no excuse prepared for declining, so he accepted the invitation, and rode beside the carriage on its return to the castle.

Sir Robert could not complain of the manner in which he was received by the ladies. The countess made as much over him as if he had been a prince, while Lady Alice treated him

with the respectful consideration of a friend, never showing by word or sign that she remembered the circumstances under which they had parted.

He took luncheon with them; entertained them with bits of personal experience on the Continent; talked nonsense with the countess, and watched studiously for Lady Alice's smiles.

After luncheon the young hostess excused herself for a moment, leaving the countess to entertain Sir Robert alone. They adjourned to one of the drawing-rooms, and were busily talking over past events, when Lady Alice re-appeared and called the countess out. The countess followed her in some surprise, and when they reached the library she observed that her friend was strangely agitated.

"What is it, my dear?" asked the countess, anxiously.

"Louis is gone."

"Louis?"

"My page."

"Gone where? What do you mean?"

Lady Alice held out a letter.

"Read that."

The countess took it half-mechanically, and read the following words:

"MY LADY:—I am going away immediately, and it is by no means probable that you will ever see me again. I must now confess that I am not what I have seemed. I am not a boy but a woman. My home is in Paris. It was there that I first met Lord Townsend. He won my heart, and I believed in him thoroughly. He lured me into a false marriage, and then told me what he had done.

"When I begged him to make me his wife, and save me from life-long disgrace, he struck me to the earth, and left me bleeding and senseless in my father's garden, to die or to live, as Heaven willed.

"When I disguised myself in male attire and came to England, my object was revenge. I was glad to become your servant, for it enabled me to be near him.

"I soon discovered that he was your suitor, and I resolved to save you from a marriage with him, if possible. He proposed to you in writing yesterday; you accepted him in writing to-day. I was in duty bound to deliver your note, but I made myself known to him, and told him I would expose his villainy. He would have murdered me then, had it not been for the interference of your friend, Sir Robert Deane. And now, my lady, I bid you a last farewell. I do not think you will marry that man after what I have here written.

"When you read this I will be gone; please let me go in peace. I shall return to Paris, and try to lead a useful life. What my true name is, is of no importance to anyone here. Let me be remembered only as

"LOUIS THE PAGE."

"A woman!" exclaimed the countess, when she had read the letter to the end. "And you never suspected it?"

"Never!"

"What a strange revelation! But it only proves what I told you about Lord Townsend.

"And you did accept him, after all?"

"No!" replied Lady Alice, with emphasis. "Louis was mistaken. He had reasons for believing as he did, and I admit that I did try to accept the man. But I could not. My note was a decided and final rejection of Lord Townsend's hand."

"Thank Heaven for that!"

"You are going, Sir Harry?"

Lady Alice had returned to her guest, and found him preparing to take his departure. The countess, whose object was to leave the young couple alone for awhile, had found something that required her attention upstairs.

"Yes, I am going," replied Sir Robert, drawing on his riding-gloves. "I cannot tell you how thankful I am for your kindness in receiving me as you have."

"And I cannot let you go until I have asked you to forgive my rudeness on a former occa-

sion," said Lady Alice, with a sudden determination.

Sir Robert turned sharply around, and looked her in the face.

She met his glance bravely, though her lip trembled treacherously.

"Do you mean that?" he asked, eagerly.

"I do," she replied. "I was rude to you, and I have been very sorry ever since. My foolish pride stood in the way of all better impulses then, but I am now ready to acknowledge that I was wrong and you were right."

"This is generous of you, Lady Alice," said Robert, his own voice beginning to tremble. "Believe me, I have forgiven you long ago for what you are pleased to term your rudeness. But it was not that alone which drove me away. It was the knowledge that I had made a terrible mistake—that I had loved you in vain. Oh, Alice—"

"Yes, Robert?"

He caught her hand suddenly.

"Do you mean—"

"Yes, I mean—"

"Alice, is it possible?"

"It is quite possible, Robert."

What they meant by such broken sentences I don't pretend to know.

But when the countess entered the room a few moments later she found Lady Alice in Sir Robert's arms, and he was kissing her with a great deal of enthusiasm.

G. W.

FACETIÆ.

A NOVELTY, says a contemporary, is a bracelet that fits any arm, and when passed over "the head," instantly adjusts itself to the wrist.

A LITTLE GIRL'S PRAYER.

EDITH's mamma was sick, and the little one felt, as she expressed it, "very mournful." At night she prayed:

"O, Lord, please to make my dear mamma well again. She must have eaten something that didn't ingest. Don't let her be sick any more, for it's no fun to her, nor to me either."

COW-BELLS.

A FARMER called at a shop one day, and the following dialogue ensued:

FARMER: "Got any cow-bells?"

CLERK: "Yes; step this way."

FARMER: "Those are too small. Haven't you any larger?"

CLERK: "No, sir; the large ones are all sold."

Rusticus started off and got as far as the door, when the clerk called after him:

"Look here, stranger, take one of these small bells for your cow, and you won't have half the trouble in finding her, for when you hear her bell you will always know that she can't be far off."

The logic was irresistible, and the farmer bought the bell.

A PROFESSIONAL MAN.

MISS A: "Is he a labouring or a professional man?"

MISS B. (gushingly): "Oh, professional. He works on the railroad; is brakeman, I believe."

MAMMA'S HAIR.

A LITTLE Elko girl surprised a company of visitors by her knowledge of the Creator's works.

At the dinner-table she exclaimed:

"God made me, and everybody else. He made mamma, too; but he forgot to put any hair on her head, and papa had to buy it for her!"

OLD AND NEW.

"Ah! how times have changed since I was young," remarked an old man. "In those days the young fellows would have been spanked if they went courtin' before they were of age; but now they begin courtin' the pillars in their

cradles, and it's ten to one if they ain't engaged to their nurses before they can walk."

MUSICAL NOTES.

JUSTICE ought to be a great musician, as she is always represented as practising with the scales.

Musicians under twenty always play in the minor key.

The most wicked instrument is a base violin, as it is both viol and base.

Musicians taking port wine call it returning to the tonic.

Musicians may be known by their company. What can you expect of people whose acquaintances lie amongst A natural, A flat, and A sharp?

When you meet a prima-donna in the street, the least she can do is to give you a prolonged shake.

It is an old allegation against musicians, that they are crotchety fellows.

CURIOUS COINCIDENCES.

It was very odd. The force of coincidences, in fact, could no farther go. One morning this week we received from our contributors a batch of letters, all apologetic in tone, and all apologising on the same ground—that of illness. A. was laid up with diaphragmal neuralgia. B. suffered from hereditary toothache. C. was down with ganglionic phthisis. D. had sprained the tendon achilles of the left arm, which prevented his writing a line.

E. was suffering intense torture from adipose intaglionisation.

F. was watching by a sick bed—it never occurring to him apparently to give the bed an emetic, and have done with it out of hand. And so on, and so on.

The singular part of the matter was that all these letters—when we came to examine them—were received on the morning after the Derby!

VERY OBVIOUS.

SECRETS put upon paper are secrets no longer. The very pen with which they are written down is certain to "split."

—Punch.

GOOD FORM.

FANCY buttons, with bank-notes, postage-stamps, and so forth on them in enamel, are very fashionable in Paris as trimmings for dresses.

A quiet style of costume to go to church in would be a dress with a row of buttons down the front decorated with all the cards of the pack—beginning, of course, with the ace of spades.

—Judy.

MAER CLAUSUM.

It is said the Russians propose to re-christen the Sea of Marmora "The Fleet Prison."

—Punch.

SHORTNESS.

A CONTEMPORARY says that nowhere are to be seen so many short men as there are in Paris. This contemporary should have a good look round in England, where, since times have been so bad, there are plenty of men "short" enough in all conscience.

—Judy.

APPEARANCES.

You can't always tell.

We have known a sweet-faced young man, who spoke such beautiful words of moral benevolence at the boarding-house table as brought tears to the tender-hearted landlady, suddenly depart with a month's board unsettled, and all the souvenir he left her is his valise, a second-hand pocket testament and a pair of faded collars.

HIS H'S.

ONE of the cleverest of our judges who, in spite of his many accomplishments has failed to master the letter "h," saw pass the other day an eminent lawyer who has sat upon the wool-sack, and whose praise is in the churches. Said the judge of the lawyer:

"There goes that sly 'umbug 'umming a ymn."

"HAPPY THOUGHT."

As, at a wedding the other evening, they were gathered around the happy couple (the bride was a widow), congratulating them, an over-sensitive friend burst into tears and sobbed:

"How glad I am her poor dear Arthur is not alive to see this day! It would have broken his heart to see this his wife married to someone else."

Then she went into hysterics and was removed, having cast a gloom all over the community.

"MR. PRESIDENT," said a U. S. senator the other day in debate, "the honourable gentleman who has just taken his seat says that England and Prussia have got torpedoes which can blow a navy sky-high; but that's nothing to us, sir. It can't affect us; for we have no navy to blow sky-high."

ANYTHING TO ACCOMMODATE.

A COUPLE of gentlemen have been in the habit of dropping in late, at noon, to a popular restaurant, and ordering hot pancakes or waffles.

These belonged to the breakfast bill of fare, and to prepare them at noon the griddles have to be reheated, causing something of an annoyance to the restaurant people.

The other day the proprietor of the place approached the gentlemen just after they had given their order, and rather indignantly said that he would rather pay a sovereign any time than fill an order for waffles at such an hour, when all were busy with the regular meal.

To pacify him, one of the gentlemen cheerfully offered to take that amount and to send a boy around for it every day instead of coming and eating waffles. He was willing to do anything to accommodate; but, oddly enough, the restaurant man not only refused to accept the proposition, but became more indignant than ever.

PARR-DON!

OLD PARR's long-lived laurels are in imminent danger.

There is an ancient man at Oxford who the other week celebrated his one-hundredth birthday.

His name is Parrer, and it is only natural, after all, that the positive Parr should be beaten by the comparative Parrer.

Now, then, where's the superlative Parrest? —Fun.

SHOCKING.

A STATUE to Volta has been unveiled at Pavia. The people call the whole affair familiarly "the Voltaic Pile."

—Funny Folks.

BIG ENOUGH.

A TALENTED young African of the boot black persuasion, while dancing like St. Vitus over a customer's boots, the other day, observed a neighbour poring wisely over a newspaper, whereupon he addressed him thus: "Julius, what the debble you lookin' at that paper fur? You can't read."

"Go 'way, fellah," replied the other, indignantly. "Guess I can read. I'm big 'nuff for that."

"Big 'nuff!" retorted the first one, scornfully. "Dat a'nt noffic. A cow's big 'nuff to catch a mice, but she can't do it."

STATISTICS.

CIVILIANS.—A return has been issued showing the number of and charge for civilians employed by the Crown in the year ending March 1876. The numbers and the charges in respect of them are as follows: Judges and magistrates, 491, £585,951; principal officers, 609, £851,323; barristers, solicitors, clergymen, professors, and surgeons, 791, £259,240; inspectors, 701, £241,867; clerks and others, on scale of salary, the minimum of which is £800 a year, 180, £171,411; clerks and others, on scale of salary the minimum of which is under £800 a year, 25,356, £4,329,902; schoolmasters, school-

mistresses, teachers, and monitors, 12,857, £327,924; persons below the rank of clerk, 81,514, £4,255,481. The charge for clerical assistance is £330,362, and for other assistance not included in the other classes, £4,866,152. The total charge is £16,219,063.

AT DAISY DINGLE.

Lo! Here is a sunshiny, sedge-tangled nook,
Hollowed out by the soft, stealthy hands
of the brook,
Where bluebells bloom early, and wood-
fern and brake
Linger long in the sun for the sweet
summer's sake;
Ah! here let me dream thro' the brief
autumn hours,
That poets have holidays well as the
flowers,
And now that my long summer toiling
is over,
I, too, may be idle with daisies and
clover!

How well I remember the dream-haunted
days
We have loitered away in these sun-
litten ways,
When the brook wove among the wild
reeds and rushes
Her Idyl—and all the sweet pipes of
the thrushes
Tuned up in accord, till each jubilant
throat
Ran the gamut, and struck some ec-
static key-note
That set all the hill-sides and wood-
lands a-ringing,
With a chorus that stirred the dead
pulses of spring!

While over us glittered in azure and
gold
The vast vaulted dome that the moun-
tains uphold;
For our world was a valley—a dimple
that smiled
In the fair cheek of Nature when she
was a child;
Tho' Nature hath older and soberer
grown,
That sweet, sunny hollow she claims
for her own;
Where unvexed by the world, its rude
turmoil and pain,
She may live her lost Idyl of Eden
again!

Ah! Sweet were the mornings, and
sweeter the eves,
With the whisper of grasses, the twitter
of leaves,
And that low, inarticulate murmur we
hear,
When the silence of night and of sleep
draweth near,
As if all the soft voices of Nature were
blent
In a drowsy Amen of thanksgiving con-
tent,
As with tired feet folded, and hands on
her breast,
And face to the darkness, she sinks to
her rest. E. A. B.

GEMS.

SOME men's only stock in trade are their mis-
fortunes. These they are always trying to force
upon the market, but they rarely ever find a
purchaser.

If you hate your enemies, you will contract
such a vicious habit of mind as by degrees will
break out upon those who are your friends, or
those who are indifferent to you.

A LIFE of full and constant employment is the
only safe and happy one.

Who ever heard of counterfeiting a bad note? Who ever heard of slandering a bad man? Slander, as a rule, is the revenge of a coward. It is generally the best people who are injured in this way.

MEN with few faults are the least anxious to discover those of others.

By communicating our joys we double them; by imparting our griefs we halve them.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

GERMAN TOAST.—Cut thick slices of baker's bread; dip them each in milk enough to soften them, the dip the in beaten egg; put them in a pan greased with just sufficient butter to fry; fry till brown as an omelet, and then serve well sprinkled with white sugar. Two eggs would be sufficient to dip nearly a dozen slices of bread pancake. The hotter the toast the better.

FLOWERS.—To preserve flowers in water, mix in a little carbonate of soda with the water, and it will preserve the flowers a fortnight. Salt-petre is also good.

LOAF CAKE.—Two and one-half cupfuls sugar, one and one-half cupfuls butter, one cupful milk, three eggs, one teaspoonful baking powder, five cupfuls flour, one wineglassful of brandy, one pound raisins, one half-pound of currants, one half-pound citron, one teaspoonful cinnamon, one-third cupful of molasses.

FRIED BREAD.—Pieces of stale bread may be utilised in the following manner: "Beat three eggs in a shallow dish; dip the bread in this, and fry in hot batter. If the bread is dry, soak in the milk first. Serve while hot."

MISCELLANEOUS.

HER MAJESTY has expressed to Professor Bell her surprise and gratification at the late exhibition of the telephone at Osborne.

THE cultivation of oysters is becoming an important branch of trade in Holland, for while the home consumption averages about 14,500,000 oysters per annum, almost as many as are exported, France alone taking more than 3,000,000. Several artificial beds and oyster parks have been formed at the mouths of the Scheldt and the Meuse, and yet England and Ireland can do scarcely anything in this remunerative line.

SIR HENRY THOMPSON has discovered that by the aid of the microphone he can discover accurately the existence of even the smallest obstructing substance which may be in the body. He imagines, too, that by the same instrument he can learn the exact position of a small bullet. In fact, the microphone will be a grand discoverer, not only in surgical cases, but in physiology.

Two men were out shooting the other day; one had a license, the other hadn't. A keeper approached, and the one that had a license ran away. The keeper was a good runner, and an exciting race ensued over about a mile, and a half of nice ploughed fields. At last the keeper got up to the runaway. "Now, sir, where's your license?" It was produced. "Then why the — did you run away?" "Oh, I'm fond of exercise," answered the man; "but don't you think you'd better ask my friend if he has one?"

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL FARQUHARSON, of Invercauld, recently presented a petition to the Court of Session asking authority to sell a part of his entailed estate to her Majesty the Queen at the total sum of £95,000. The portion proposed to be sold lies to the east of the Balmoral estate; £60,000 is declared to be the value of the lands, half of which is to go to clear off encumbrances, and the remainder invested on behalf of the heirs of entail; the remaining £35,000, being the value of the timber, is to be paid to the petitioner as heir of entail in possession.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

JACK.—We make no charge for advertisements inserted in this page.

CRISTY.—We do not know the religious belief of either individual.

ALLAN.—Your first communication must have miscarried.

WILLIAM.—We thank you for your obliging offer, but we have some doubt whether we should put the ingenuity of our readers to the test of solving riddles.

ADVISER.—On the subject of advice, our correspondents have been most liberal, and although it would be quite impossible to adopt all their suggestions, yet they may be assured we respect them all.

CATO.—The two orders of monks and friars are often confounded by writers, especially writers of novels. Monachism was an old institution for laymen, and friars, or freres, were originally established in the thirteenth century, to oppose the Lollards by their preaching, on which account they wandered about as preachers and confessors, while the monks were chiefly confined to their respective houses.

CONCERTO.—The celebrated Haydn composed, from his 18th to his 73rd year, 112 overtures, 163 pieces for the viola de Gamba, 20 divertissements for various instruments, 3 marches, 24 trios, 6 violin solos, 15 concertos for different instruments, 30 services, 83 quartetts, 66 sonatas, 42 duets, 2 German puppet-operas (a performance which the Empress Maria Theresa was much attached to), 5 oratorios, 365 Scotch airs, and 400 minuets and waltzes; total, 1386. He was born in 1733, and died in 1809.

Y. A.—It was a custom in Persia, and may be so still, to drink the juice of boiled poppies, called Cocequan. This beverage made those who drank it first merry and good-humoured, but its ultimate effect was invariably an extreme melancholy. Such, however, was its nature, that those who left it off after having for some time been habituated to it generally died in consequence. So when Abbas the Great published an edict to prohibit the use of it, on account of its dismal effects on the constitution, a great mortality followed, which was only stopped at last by restoring the use of the prohibited beverage. And this was brought about by a whimsical stratagem of the king's jester, of which Sir John Chardin gives a very curious account, but it is too long to be inserted in this journal.

ARTHUR.—It is dangerous to strike a match in any place where there are inflammable materials and consequently danger of setting things on fire. A perfectly safe light, however, may be easily procured. Take an oblong phial of the whitest glass, and put into it a piece of phosphorus about the size of a pea. Pour some olive oil, heated to the boiling point, upon the phosphorus; fill the phial about one-third and then cork it tightly. To use this novel light remove the cork, allow the air to enter the phial, and then recork it. The empty space in the phial will become luminous, and the light obtained will be equal to that of a lamp. When the light grows dim its power can be increased by taking out the cork and allowing a fresh supply of air to enter the phial. In winter it is sometimes necessary to heat the phial between the hands in order to increase the fluidity of the oil. The apparatus, thus prepared, may be used for six months. This is something worth remembering.

CHARLES B.—The earliest mode of writing was on bricks, tiles, oyster-shells, stones, ivory, bark, and leaves of trees, and from the latter the term "leaves of trees" is probably derived. Copper and brass plates were very early in use, and a bill of feoffment on copper was some years since discovered in India, bearing date one hundred years B.C.; leather was also used, as well as wooden tablets. Then the papyrus came into vogue, and about the eighth century the papyrus was superseded by parchment. Paper, however, is of great antiquity, especially among the Chinese, but the first paper-mill in England was built in 1588 by a German, at Darford, in Kent. Nevertheless, it was nearly a century and a half—namely, in 1713—before Thomas Watkins, a stationer, brought paper-making to anything like perfection. The first approach to a pen was the stylus, a kind of iron bodkin, but the Romans forbade its use on account of its frequent and even fatal use in quarrels, and then it was made of bone. Subsequently reeds, pointed and split like pens as in the present day, were used.

SKYSAIL and **ROYAL TRUCK**, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies: **SKYSAIL** is twenty-three, tall, good-looking, dark hair and eyes. **ROYAL TRUCK** is twenty-two, fair, good-looking, medium height.

KATE, thirty, dark, fond of home and children, would like to correspond with a gentleman with a view to matrimony.

N. L. and **E. A.** would like to correspond with two young men. **N. L.** is sixteen, auburn hair, dark grey eyes. **E. A.** is seventeen, medium height, dark brown hair, grey eyes.

EMMELINE and **KATIE**, two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen. **Emmeline** is twenty-one, eighteen, curly hair. **Katie** is twenty-three, medium height, tall.

E. G. J., twenty-one, good-looking, would like to correspond with a young lady about seventeen.

NELLIE and **POLLIE**, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. **Nellie** is twenty, tall, dark hair, blue eyes. **Pollie** is twenty-two, dark hair and eyes, of a loving disposition. Respondents must be about twenty-two, tall.

L. M. and **H. W.**, two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. **L. M.** is twenty-two, of medium height, fair, loving. **H. W.** is twenty, tall, dark, good-looking.

FRED would like to correspond with a young lady about seventeen.

RATLIN THE REEFER, **JACK THE ROVER**, **KING COFFEE**, and **JACK STERNFAST**, four seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with four young ladies. **Ratlin** the Reeper is of medium height, dark, fond of home. **Jack the Rover** is tall, dark, good-looking. **King Coffee** is of medium height, fond of music. **Jack Sternfast** is handsome, of a loving disposition. Respondents must be about twenty-four.

READER, good-looking, light brown hair, dark blue eyes, would like to correspond with a young man with a view to matrimony.

GOOD-BYE, ROSES.

"T'will be sad to bid roses 'good-bye,'
With the rest of the earth-treasures dear,
To know the dead breast wears them last,
That they wither at last on the bier.

I know that the sanctified soul
Will be happy in rest at His feet,
That a perfect and blessed content
Awaits us—but roses are sweet.

They have lain on our breasts and our brows
When our hearts were with feeling a-quiver;
Must they float quite away from our hands
On the tide of the measureless river?

I think He made fair roses last
As the crown of the third day's employ,
With their curvings of velvet around,
And golden hearts free from alloy.

And then, as a soul was a gift
Kept for man, heir of glory and heaven,
Too precious for creatures that fade,
To the roses sweet odour was given.

Bloom-odour, that beautiful type
Of a body assured, yet unseen,
Whose coming and going we know,
Though we see not the rose or its sheen.

Ay, it shows out the mystical truth
Of the glorified body to me,
And how, out of festering flesh,
Our saints still shall be recognised be.

Seeing here that the blind need no sight
To discern rose and lily apart,
We may know, in some sweet subtle way,
All the loves of humanity's heart.

So, rose, you have taught me the while
A new lesson, as evermore those
Who shall choose it, may read the fair tale,
And may point up to Him with a rose. E. L.

N. F. L., twenty, fair, medium height, would like to correspond with a gentleman about twenty-four, fond of home.

G. L. and **B. G.**, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. **G. L.** is seventeen, light hair, blue eyes, medium height. **B. G.** is eighteen, medium height, dark hair, dark brown eyes, loving, fond of home and children.

M. R. D., thirty-one, a soldier, would like to correspond with a lady about his own age with a view to matrimony.

T. C. F., twenty-four, dark hair, hazel eyes, fair, and medium height, wishes to correspond with a gentleman. Must be fair, good-looking.

S. C. L. and **W. G.**, two friends, would like to correspond with two seamen in the Royal Navy. **S. C. L.** is twenty-eight, tall. **W. G.** is nineteen, medium height. Respondents must be between nineteen and twenty-two, dark.

N. A. and **N. G.**, two friends, wish to correspond with two young men. **N. A.** is seventeen, medium height, of a loving disposition, light hair, blue eyes, fond of home and children. **N. G.** is eighteen, brown hair, dark eyes, fond of home and children, medium height, of a loving disposition. Respondents must be about twenty-one, fond of home.

T. S. L., a seaman in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony. He is dark, medium height, good-looking. Respondent must be about twenty-two.

E. E. G., twenty, brown hair, grey eyes, domesticated, would like to correspond with a young man about the same age.

P. R. and **F. E.**, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. **P. R.** is twenty, tall, brown hair, dark eyes, fond of home. **F. E.** is twenty-four, medium height, dark brown hair, dark eyes, and very fond of music.

D. C. and **K. A.** would like to correspond with two young men. **D. C.** is dark, medium height, of a loving disposition. **K. A.** is twenty, good-looking.

P. R. and **T. F.**, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. **P. R.** is twenty-seven, dark hair, dark grey eyes, medium height. **T. F.** is eighteen, fair, medium height, light hair, light grey eyes, thoroughly domesticated.

CLARA, nineteen, fair, fond of home and music, tall, would like to correspond with a young man with a view to matrimony.

EMILY S., twenty-five, tall, dark, would like to correspond with a young lady about the same age, loving, and tall.

F. J., twenty, dark, would like to correspond with a young gentleman with a view to matrimony, twenty-two, good-tempered.

P. B. S., nineteen, of a loving disposition, tall, dark hair, would like to correspond with a young gentleman with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be about twenty, fond of home and children, brown hair, dark eyes.

ESTHER, fair, auburn hair, tall, grey eyes, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young man with a view to matrimony.

ROSE, eighteen, good-tempered, would like to correspond with a fair young lady about seventeen, fond of home.

MARY, fair, good-looking, wishes to correspond with a young man.

C. L. and **T. D.**, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. **C. L.** is eighteen, fond of music. **T. D.** is seventeen, dark hair, brown eyes, and loving. Respondents must be about twenty, dark, and tall.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

LILY is responded to by—**F. S.**, eighteen, fair, medium height.

ANNIE by—**H. P.**, nineteen.

EFFIE by—**C. Q.**

MARY H. by—**W. T.**, twenty-two, dark, fond of home and music.

B. D. by—**S. J. T.**, twenty-two, fair.

BOLD HARRY by—**E. H. T.**, eighteen, domesticated, blue eyes, fair, of a loving disposition, tall, and handsome.

BASHFUL JACK by—**Maudie S.**, medium height, dark, good-looking.

TOM by—**Nelly**, nineteen.

FRANK by—**Florry**, eighteen, light hair, blue eyes, tall, fair.

M. W. by—**T. A. M.**

POLLY by—**A. G. L.**, nineteen, brown hair, blue eyes, fond of home.

C. G. E. by—**J. C.**

F. E. by—**H. J. T.**

BLANCHET by—**Richard**, thirty-three, golden hair, light blue eyes.

MARY by—**Bill**, twenty-one, dark hair, blue eyes, fair, good-tempered.

AMELIA by—**Samuel**.

HARRY by—**R. S.**, twenty, blue eyes, fond of home, loving.

FANNY by—**George**, thirty-six, fond of home, good-looking.

HILDA by—**K. R.**, twenty-three, fond of home, domesticated.

BELLE by—**R. M.**, twenty-one, dark hair and eyes, fair, fond of children.

HARRIET P. by—**H. P.**, twenty-five, tall, fond of home and children.

S. L. by—**Emily**.

CARMER by—**Willis**, twenty-four, brown hair and eyes, fair.

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